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Japan's Incremental Grand Strategic Shift in the 21st
Century: The Cases of Article 9 and Ballistic Missile
Defence Through a Neoclassical Realist Approach

By

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Declaration

This work is entirely conducted by the candidate. None of the work has been submitted for a degree at another university.

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Abstract

This PhD thesis examines the development of Japan's security policy between 2004 and 2018 using two cases relating to (1) the constitution and collective self-defence (CSD) and (2) Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD). This research aims to identify under what conditions Japan accelerates/decelerates its balancing behaviour and attempts to test a theory of neoclassical realism (NCR). The discrepancy between theoretical predictions and Japan's actual behaviour is largely attributable to the dynamics of unit-level variables that are not yet captured theoretically in the constantly changing strategic environment. These unit-level variables include leaders, the constitution, bureaucrats, the public and socio-economic groups. This research also aims to pit these variables against each other to identify the relative weight of each with regard to respective explanatory powers. The current literature on realism and constructivism often fails to examine the issues regarding 'to what extent Japan will remilitarise', 'what has accelerated/decelerated this process' and 'the relationship between external and internal political influence'. The two cases presented in this thesis help highlight two policy-making processes: legal security capacity and military capability. The often unparalleled development of these two security policy areas enables us to examine Japan's shift in grand strategic adjustment. This thesis concludes that although Japan has not behaved as realists predicted, since the 2000s its behaviour has increasingly shifted from a defensive realist grand strategy to an offensive realist one. Japan has not just 'remilitarised' in an incremental, linear manner; its 'velocity' of upward trend has fluctuated constantly depending on the unit-level variables within the framework of NCR. In the early 2000s, Japan adopted a defensive realist type of behaviour that focused primarily on enhancing its defence capabilities. Due to an aggravating strategic environment with ambitious leaders and domestic political stability since the 2010s, Japan has sought to project its larger influence through an attempted constitutional revision for full degree CSD and the potential possession of offensive capabilities in BMD. This thesis employs NCR and pre-defined intervening variables to examine under what conditions, why and when Japan shifts its grand strategy, and what factors trigger the shift to provide a more nuanced yet accurate interpretation of Japan's behaviour.

List of Abbreviations

ABM	Anti-ballistic Missile
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATLA	Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
BMD	Ballistic Missile Defence
CLB	Cabinet Legislative Bureau
CSD	Collective Self-defence
DA	Defence Agency
DPJ	Democratic Party of Japan
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FMS	Foreign Military Sales
FPE	Foreign Policy Executive
GSOMIA	General Security of Military Information Agreement
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
IR	International Relations
JADI	Japan Association of Defence Industry
JAXA	Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
METI	Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MDA	Mutual Defence Assistance
NASDA	National Space Development Agency of Japan
NCR	Neoclassical Realism
NDPG	National Defence Programme Guidelines
NMD	National Missile Defence
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSC	National Security Council
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PKO	Peacekeeping Operation
PNP	People's New Party
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
SAJ	Shipbuilders' Association of Japan

SDF	Self-Defence Force
SDI	Strategic Defence Initiative
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SJAC	Society of Japanese Aerospace Companies
START I	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty I
THAAD	Terminal High Altitude Area Defence
TMD	Theatre Missile Defence
UN	United Nations
US	United States

1 Introduction

1.1 Research Puzzle and the Purpose of the Thesis

‘What drives Japan to behave as it did and does?’ is the question primarily rooted in this research. To the best of the author’s knowledge, few IR scholars and policy-makers predicted that post-WWII Japan would develop in a unique way focused on economic recovery and growth, with little attention to security. This led to the emergence of Japan as a ‘structural anomaly’ (Waltz, 1979). Furthermore, no one envisaged that in the post-Cold War era, it would take Japan 25 years to break the long-standing taboo of the right of collective self-defence (CSD). Many expected it to happen much sooner. In the 2000s, many scholars thought Japan would revise its constitution due to a changing strategic environment reflecting the rise of China and the emergence of North Korea as a threat (Boyd & Samuels, 2005; Hughes, 2006; Itoh, 2001)—but it has yet to do so. Similarly, no one thought that the discussion of CSD would lead to a limited degree through reinterpreting the constitution, not the revision.

Equally, it was hard to predict in the 2000s that the introduction of ballistic missile defence (BMD) would easily remove the constitutional constraints, such as the ban on the use of space for military purposes, the ban on the export of arms and CSD, given the decades-long attempts to remove them. This removal slowed considerably in the late 2000s. However, since the 2010s, the Japanese government once again has accelerated its upgrade of security policy by considering the acquisition of aircraft carriers and counter-strike capability.

Overall, Japan’s security policy seems to be on the incremental trajectory of ‘re-militarisation’ (Bee Yun, 2016; Hughes, 2009; Takao, 2008). However, its ‘velocity’ of upward security policy development is hardly captured or accounted for. From a realist perspective, its temperamental and inconsistent speed of security policy development is a puzzle despite a constant aggravation of the strategic environment. The main question for this thesis is ‘what leads Japan to accelerate and decelerate its incremental security policy development?’. Theoretically, there is an intense argument between constructivism and realism. On the one hand, constructivists maintain that the so-called ‘anti-militarism’—be it institutionally embedded or socially accepted—plays a crucial role in suppressing Japan’s ‘urge’ to upgrade its security against emerging threats (Berger, 1996; Katzenstein, 1996; Oros, 2015). On the other hand, realists

contend that Japan has become more receptive to the strategic environment despite a significant hindrance in domestic factors (Auslin, 2017; Hughes, 2016; Kliman, 2006). Constructivism and realism share commonalities in that Japan developed its security policy concerning structural factors such as China and North Korea. Furthermore, its domestic factors have somewhat constrained the degree of the incremental shift. However, the velocity and fluctuating speed of development are hardly captured by the existing literature. This thesis thus examines under what conditions Japan has started and strengthens/neglects its balancing behaviour. It ultimately aims to extrapolate Japan's trajectory and the contents of its 'grand strategy' framework.

Many scholars attribute Japan's unpredictable speed of policy development to domestic factors, including the prime minister (Envall, 2015; Hughes, 2015a; Shinoda, 2011), bureaucrats (Johnson, 1995; Stockwin, 2008), the public (Berger, 1996; Midford, 2006), the constitution and its interpretations (Easley, 2017; Katzenstein, 2008), and even the role of the elections (Catalinac, 2016). Numerous research puzzles arise in this debate. Is the prime minister so critical in shaping Japan's security policy, particularly since Shinzo Abe came to power for the second time in 2012? How do bureaucrats who were once considered to control all the policy-making dimensions play a role in security policy now? Has Japan merely been a follower of American strategic behaviours? How has the strategic environment, with threats such as North Korea and China, influenced Japan? To what extent do the pacifist constitution and its interpretation, particularly Article 9, come into play now as a guardian to prevent Japan from being 'normal'? Does the socially accepted norm of anti-militarism amongst the public have a specific role in formulating security policy? The issues surrounding Japanese security policy are well summarised by Envall (2003, p. 8): it is 'whether these obstacles [domestic factors] are greater than Japan's foreign policy potential [in response to the security environment]'. On this matter, the thesis embarks on a rather ambitious task: it attempts to examine how the relative weight of such domestic factors can be compared as an explanatory variable without ignoring external factors. In doing so, the thesis attempts to pit these factors against each other in a consistent NCR theoretical framework

As a backdrop, scholars increasingly appreciate the value of empirically specific concepts, such as historical contingency and long-accumulated social norms, as well as ideational aspects regarding Japan's security policy (Pekkanen, Ravenhill & Foot, 2014). This inevitably imposes a dilemma between theoretical parsimony and context-rich explanatory power on researchers, resulting in scholars' inclination towards eclectic

theorisation (Katzenstein & Sil, 2008). However, this thesis is not necessarily in line with the trend as an analytical framework and attempts to provide a theoretical account for Japan's security policy development while striking a balance between parsimony and explanatory power. Confirming a theory's logical consistency and accuracy—particularly a newly developed theory—by testing the case of Japan as 'structural anomaly' not only adds cumulative knowledge but also makes sense of deviation.

As a conclusion, the thesis finds that amongst the many factors, influencing Japan's security policy, leaders matter the most besides the impact of the structure. This is in comparison to the influence of the constitution, the public and socio-economic groups. Leaders are often accountable in terms of both acceleration and deceleration of Japan's balancing behaviour. In the end, Japan's grand strategy has begun shifting from the one inspired by defensive realism to the one similar to an offensive realist state.

1.2 Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This thesis employs NCR as a main theoretical framework to define the above domestic factors into three categories: leaders' image, domestic institutions and state-society relations. It aims to examine the relationship between the structure as an independent variable and foreign policy outcome as a dependent variable through the effective utilisation of the three as intervening variables. To put it simply, NCR dictates that the structure delineates strategic options that a state should take and the selection amongst them depends on the interaction of intervening variables. As a theory testing, process tracing is applied as a methodology to examine whether 'causal mechanisms' in a theory function in the actual world. In the case of NCR, the causal mechanism(s) of the intervening variables is a transmission belt between the structure (independent variable) and a state's behaviour (dependent variable) (Checkel, 2008; Derek, 2017; Mahoney, 2015). As indicated above, there are empirically important factors in domestic politics in Japan that shape its behaviour. The examination of the causal mechanisms helps us to determine whether they play as much of a role as is argued and clarify the academic debate surrounding Japan.

Leaders refer to two categories of actors in Japan's security policy: elected leaders (i.e. politicians) and other leaders who are not elected through the elections (i.e. bureaucrats). Elected leaders are often put into a place where they have to strike a balance between

the strategic needs of security policy and ‘political legitimacy’ for maintaining or consolidating their current political position (leaders’ dilemma). Despite being less influential, non-elected leaders constantly strive to realise their strategic visions. Leaders’ image thus implies two things: the leaders’ dilemma of elected leaders and the strategic visions pursued by non-elected leaders. The domestic institutions take two forms: regulations and laws to determine ‘who the leaders are to shape security policies’ and the institutionalised form of anti-militarism (i.e. the constitution and its interpretations binding Japan’s security policy). The last variable is state-society relations, which refers to the coherence between the government and societal (the public) and economic groups with influence over policy-making.

For the sake of clarity, there is a quasi-hierarchy amongst the intervening variables. Leaders’ image functions to challenge against the domestic institutions. Domestic institutions are a rather static barrier for the realisation of leaders’ image, wherein state-society relations are hypothesised to lean towards either of them as part of leaders’ necessary resources or the lack thereof (Ripsman, Taliaferro & Lobell, 2016). The relationship of the variables simulates the debate between constructivism and realism in a realist paradigm: static nature (a barrier to prevent leaders from acting to respond to the structure) versus leaders (who are the main receptor of the signal from the structure and respond accordingly).

This research intends to employ process tracing as a methodology. This is used for tracing ‘causal mechanisms’ through an in-depth empirical examination of how intervening variables come into play (Gerring, 2007). It aims to identify the ‘causal mechanism’ that has yet to be confirmed to link causes and outcomes by examining the above intervening variables.

1.3 Japan in Broader International Relations Debates and the Contributions of the Thesis

A brief discussion examining Japan as a case in the broader context of international relations (IR) debate merits mention. First, as reiterated above, Japan is a valuable empirical case as a major power globally with its economy (third largest) and security spending (eighth highest) (SIPRI, 2018). As with conventional theories such as realism and liberalism, which aim to explain broad patterns of state behaviour, accounting for Japan’s theoretically temperamental behaviour does enrich our understanding of the

country as an empirical study of how a major power behaves. Second, the time period—between 2004 and 2018—during which Japan is observed in this thesis adds contributions because China overtook Japan in 2011 militarily and economically. This suggests a change in the regional balance, which is often the cause of confrontation/conflict. How a state reacts to a rising power—especially its neighbour—and the degree of the rise on the path for a ‘superpower’ is itself a valuable empirical case. Theoretically accounting for a state’s behaviour will contribute to realist research paradigms.

Second, Japan can be an important empirical case in many IR-related concepts. First, Japan can add to our knowledge of defensive realism concepts, meaning the relationship between security policy, technological diffusion and geography (Snyder, 1996). Second, as well as China, Japan’s current proactive stance gives us clues to the conditions that cause a shift from status quo power or challenger. Third, because Japan is bound by its constitution on security policy, it can provide empirical evidence for the relationship between law/constitution and security policy. Fourth, as many IR scholars confirm the influence of domestic politics on security policy, which includes leaders, the public, bureaucrats, civilian control, techno-nationalism and domestic institutions. Japan is no exception, and these factors can be examined in the case of Japan.

Third, the thesis aims to test NCR, which recently has been developed into a rigorous framework by several studies (Diesen, 2016; Juneau, 2015; Ripsman, Taliaferro & Lobell, 2016). As N. R. Smith (2018, p. 747) argues, ‘NCR has grown over the past decades, [and] the push to make NCR more than just a theoretically informed toolkit has similarly grown stronger . . . while their ambitious claims have yet to be empirically verified’. Thus, it is a meaningful endeavour to test NCR in the case of Japan to ‘verify’ its logical consistency and explanatory power. A sound application with satisfactory results not only serves as a simple theory testing but also partially contributes to the endeavours to strengthen such a theory. There is a growth of literature in the application of NCR in the field of contemporary Japanese security (Cha, 2000; Lai, 2014; Saltzman, 2015; Sherrill & Hough, 2015; Yoo, 2012; Yuzawa, 2018; Zakowski, Bochorodycz & Socha, 2018). However, while some show promising results, the scope is often very particular, be it event, action or time, often due to the limited space in journal articles. The thesis thus intends to examine the longer and broader scope of Japan’s security policy development under the ‘grand strategy’ framework to contribute cumulative knowledge of NCR application literature in both Japan and Asia.

1.4 Two Case Studies: The Constitution and Ballistic Missile Defence

The thesis primarily examines two cases: the constitutional revision/reinterpretation debate with a specific focus on the right of Article 9 and BMD. CSD had been long prohibited under the constitutional interpretation of Article 9 since its establishment in 1951. The constitutional revision/reinterpretation debates proceeded around Article 9. It is arguably the most significant constraint on Japan's security policy because it largely restricts Japan's external balancing options, such as providence of security, with other countries, including the United States (US) (Samuels, 2006). BMD is perhaps the first military equipment primarily designed to address strategic weapons such as intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).

These two case studies fit the purpose of the thesis. The first purpose of this thesis is to investigate under what conditions Japan accelerates/decelerates its balancing behaviour. Both cases are developed continuously during the period between 2004 and 2018. More importantly, these are the prime factors that allow us to examine the degree of balancing behaviour as the constitution and its change delineates what Japan can constitutionally do in terms of balancing, and the development of BMD indicates Japan's actual ability to balance.

On the one hand, CSD not only allows Japan to engage in external balancing but also potentially leads to the revision of the constitution. The revision could enable Japan to possess offensive capabilities to jump into an arms race as internal balancing (Samuels & Boyd, 2005). Either way, because these balancing behaviours have been restricted, a reinterpretation or revision would be a clear sign of how Japan would engage in the strategic environment and its threat.

On the other hand, BMD is principally for internal balancing through strengthening defensive capabilities—often captured in the debate of the offence–defence balance (Jervis, 1976). The degree to which Japan develops its defence system indicates whether Japan theoretically shows a balancing behaviour vis-à-vis China and North Korea, both of which possess ICBM and medium-range ballistic missiles. Furthermore, examining BMD could enable us to examine whether Japan is engaged in counter-balancing through offensive capabilities; part of the BMD system potentially consists of 'pre-emptive strike' and 'counter-strike capability', which requires offensive capabilities such as aircraft carriers and cruise missiles (Ota, 2009). Because Japan did not possess

these capabilities when it started deploying BMD, the investigation of BMD development regarding systems and military equipment helps us delineate its balancing behaviour.

The second purpose of this thesis is to examine causal mechanisms between structure and policy outcome (BMD and the constitution) through the calculation of domestic politics (the intervening variables). The two cases are deeply connected with structure and domestic politics. For the first case, constitutional reinterpretation and revision must go through the ‘domestic policy-making’ process because the reinterpretation requires the enactment, which needs two-thirds of seats in the Lower House, while the revision requires a national referendum (Neary, 2002). More importantly, the ruling party has the authority to initiate the law-making process or the revision, which allows us to examine leaders’ image, including the prime minister. Furthermore, the constitution itself is a ‘domestic institution’ that constrains Japan’s policy development and even overrides international law (i.e. United Nations [UN] Charter). It is, then, possible to examine the extent to which institutionalised forms of anti-militarism, such as the constitution, are relevant.

Similarly, BMD widens our scope of domestic factors. Because it is the military side of security policy, the broad direction of the Cabinet is often executed by bureaucrats. This enables us to examine how they influence the acquisition of military equipment, which is indicative of Japan’s balancing strategy. The comparison of the two cases lets us further elaborate on the analysis of the influence of the public and how leaders act with(out) the need for public support. By tracing the two cases to determine the extent to which these variables mitigate the impact and signals given by the structure—specifically, ‘when’ and ‘how’—the thesis aims to account for the temperamental nature of Japan’s balancing behaviour.

The two cases help to address the third purpose of this thesis: determining the relative weight of each intervening variable in explaining ‘when’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ each is present or absent in the two cases. The comparison of the two cases investigates the purported and prolonged influence of the domestically spread anti-militarism norm.

The period between 2004 and 2018 is roughly divided into three stages: 2004–2009, 2009–2012 and 2012–2018. The first stage concerns the ruling party of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) with four prime ministers and four Cabinet shuffles. This stage

serves as an excellent study of the influence of the various prime ministers while the details of the two intervening variables (domestic institutions and state-society relations) remain unchanged. The second stage, with three prime ministers and Cabinets under the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), allows us to make a fair comparison as to the examination of leaders regardless of political parties with the same conditions with the two variables. The third stage is when the LDP rose back with Prime Minister Abe, which leads us to focus on the influence of a single leader.

1.5 Summary and Contributions of the Thesis

The thesis largely confirms the validity of NCR as an effective theoretical framework to analyse Japan because it provides a clear link between structure and policy outcome through the intervening variables. It observes the causal mechanisms of each intervening variable to mediate the impact of the structure. This does not mean the structure is largely diminished; the more aggravating the strategic environment, the greater its influence (Ripsman *et al*, 2016). In response, leaders prioritise strategic needs while they maintain a level of public support. The level of public opposition waned where domestic institutions' hitherto role of constitutional guardian was downplayed by leaders. Ultimately, Japan, which only began the broad discussion of constitutional revision in 2004 and issued the Cabinet decision to deploy BMD, has seen substantial development in both cases. The balancing behaviour of Japan moved towards defensive realist strategy by 2009, and since 2012, it again shifted towards offensive realist strategy.

On the one hand, CSD was allowed in 2015 when leaders were comparatively more passionate about their strategic visions. By 2017, initial agreement on the constitutional revision of Article 9 was reached within the ruling party. On the other hand, the degree of BMD capability was substantially upgraded qualitatively and quantitatively, and Japan has begun considering the acquisition of offensive capabilities such as aircraft carriers and 'counter-strike capability' (cruise missiles) (Mainichi Shimbun, 2018b). Thus, the thesis explains Japan's responsiveness to the structure in a more nuanced way with the intervening variables. In other words, the acute strategic environment creates a favourable situation where leaders would find it easy to pursue their strategic visions. Nonetheless, there is also the stage (2009–2012) when leaders, in spite of their awareness of the strategic needs, could not materialise sufficient resources to realise their will. Accordingly, the influence of domestic institutions goes beyond leaders. In

this stage, domestic institutions, along with the distance between leaders and state-society relations, accounts for the deceleration of Japan's balancing behaviour despite the more aggravating strategic environment.

Amongst the intervening variables, leaders' image is the most important variable in the NCR model in the case of Japan. Contrary to the suggestions in some constructivist literature such as Berger (1996), the so-called anti-militarism was not as substantial as claimed. While the state-society relation plays a crucial role, its influence declined as the strategic environment became aggravated. Thus, the thesis confirms the importance of leaders in Japan—particularly the degree of their enthusiasm to respond to the environment, even though it might put them in a position to lose public support.

In summary, Japan started to shift its security policy in 2012 from an increase in defensive capabilities, which is more or less in line with Japan's stance of exclusively defensive-oriented defence, to a nascent revisionist stance with the offensive capabilities to balance against it. Given the ongoing aggravation of the strategic environment, NCR predicts that Japan will increase its military budget to develop further its offensive capabilities, which ultimately destabilises the region to a substantial degree as offensive realism predicts. In this sense, NCR, rather than simply dichotomised between defensive realism and offensive realism, utilises the intervening variables to capture Japan's security policy development, its shift to an offensive realist state, and how, why and when it occurred.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 2 presents a literature review to examine the conditions or factors contributing to Japan's development of its security policy. It highlights a contentious debate between realists and constructivists regarding the structure versus agency debate. The analysis argues that the application of NCR is a meaningful way to provide a more nuanced realist view of Japan with a level of incorporation of constructivism-inspired factors.

Chapter 3 outlines the theory and methodology used in this thesis. It explains the strengths of NCR and process training in comparison with other theories and defines the very core of realism's concepts, such as structure and structural modifiers, on which NCR is based. This explanation is followed by a discussion of how the methodology of

process tracing is applied. The chapter then moves onto the operationalisation of NCR in the case of Japan's security policy, particularly with regard to the constitutional reinterpretation/revision with regard to CSD and the development of BMD.

Chapter 4 outlines the foundational analysis of NCR, which is used in the following chapters to examine the case studies. This assessment of the strategic environment as an independent variable in NCR helps to delineate what kind of signals the structure has sent to Japan. In doing so, the chapter is based on the analytical framework of 'threat perception', meaning there are three conditions to proceed the analysis: (1) the intention to inflict harm, (2) the economic and military capability to do so and (3) the degree of imminence with specific focus on China and North Korea.

Chapters 5 and 6 focus on case studies. Chapter 5 introduces the first case study—the constitutional reinterpretation/revision with emphasis on CSD—which constitutes the core debate of the revision with many implications for Japan's security policy. It examines the period between 2004 and 2018. Chapter 6 introduces the second case study—the development of BMD—which primarily considers how the capability of BMD has developed by tracing both institutional and material changes between 2004 and 2018. It shows how Japan's engagement in balancing through BMD has changed.

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis by considering the independent variable (structure), the dependent variable (outcomes of BMD and constitutional revision debate) and the intervening variables (leaders' image, domestic institutions and state-society relations). It also considers the analysis in terms of limitations and further research areas and provides future implications on Japan's security policy development.

2 Literature Review: What Drives Japan, How It Behaves and Where It Is Headed

As Hughes (2015b) pointed out, the number of studies and the degree of scholarly attention to Japan's security policy have increased since the end of the Cold War. Japan's security posture was once considered 'low profile' and rather static; it now has transformed into a more proactive one with further involvement in the international system. According to Hughes (2015b), the existing literature can be categorised into three inter-related but distinguished scopes of a research puzzle: (1) why Japan behaves as it does, (2) how it tries to achieve its security domestically, regionally and internationally, and (3) where and in which direction it will advance. This section first indicates the post-Cold War development of Japan's security policy, then moves onto the three categories of the literature review and concludes with the identification of a research puzzle.

2.1 Japan's Re-emergence in the International System Post-Cold War

In IR debate, Japan is often characterised as 'abnormal' because of its fluctuation in security policy and theoretically inconsistent behaviours post-WWII to the present (Soeya, Tadokoro & Welch, 2014). Immediately post-WWII, the Japanese constitution was re-established almost from scratch, replacing the one from the Meiji period. In particular, Article 9 is famously known as a 'pacifist constitution', a permanent renunciation of the right to wage war and possess 'war potential' (Dower, 1999). In return for allowing the US to locate its military bases in Japan and providing security, Japan devoted its resources to economic recovery and development (Buckley, 1992; Hamada, 2011; Hayashi, 1979; Moore, 1987).

While Article 9 essentially precludes Japan's right to possess even defence capabilities according to the initial interpretation of it in the immediate post-WWII era, Japan was under constant US pressure during the Cold War to upgrade its military capability, leading Japan to establish the Self-Defence Force (SDF) in the 1950s (Kusunoki, 2017; Sasaki & Nakanishi, 2017). Given the considerable opposition from the public, known as 'anti-militarism', policymakers in Japan set self-imposed constraints to accommodate US pressures and public opposition (Hook, 1996; Schoppa, 1993). This includes non-nuclear proliferation, a 1% ceiling on the defence budget, a ban on the export of arms and a ban of CSD (Berger, 1996; Oros, 2008; Soeya, Tadokoro & Welch, 2011).

Luttwak (2009, p. 70) defined grand strategy as ‘all that is military happens within the much broader context of domestic governance, international politics [and] economic activity’. Japan’s grand strategy was a low-security profile in the international system with a focus on economic development, which is famously known as the ‘Yoshida Doctrine’ (Kusunoki, 2009; A. Watanabe, 2009). The nature of such a stance lies in the interpretation of the constitution because the clause is short and ambiguous which requires interpretation to delineate the implications. For instance, what the phrase in the clause, ‘war potential’ constitutes and what does not was discussed extensively and in-depth in the National Diet in the 1950s (Dower, 1999). This discussion was settled by the agreement that military capabilities specifically designed for self-defence are not ‘war potential’ although this phrase is still ambiguous. The definition of self-defence therefore is a much debated area that has evolved from the 1950s to the present. Until the 1990s, (individual) self-defence was strictly confined to the sovereign territory of Japan and hence it was impossible for Japan to participate in any conflict or peacekeeping operation (PKOs) outside Japan—which by necessity has meant CSD is impossible.

Despite the rather long-lasting low-profile stance, the 1990s saw the nascent transformation of Japan’s security policy. The inability to dispatch the SDF to the Gulf War with massive financial contributions and subsequent international criticism for its lack of ‘boots on the ground’ attitudes are argued to have encouraged/forced Japan to take a more international and active role in the international system by reinterpreting the constitution and enacting the relevant laws (Courtney, 1992; Dhirathiti, 2007; Inoguchi, 1991). Coinciding with the end of the Cold War, the 1990s were domestically chaotic for Japan. The economic bubble burst along with an ensuing sense of ending 37 years privileging LDP one-party dominance. While the security environment rapidly changed due to the disappearance of the Soviet Union and the rise of China and North Korea with developing nuclear weapons, Japan experienced a substantial domestic turmoil with the following considerable political reforms. With a waned alliance with the US due to the latter’s lack of strategic and geographical interests in the Asia-Pacific, Japanese policymakers were forced to reconsider their security policy. The chain of causes for the chaotic 1990s is defined as a ‘rude awakening’ (Funabashi, 1997; Gupta, 2016; Hughes, 1999; Lennon, 2002).

There has been a nascent transformation of Japan’s re-emergence through constitutional reinterpretation. Japan enacted an International Peace Cooperation Law in 1992 that

enables the dispatch of the SDF overseas on UN PKOs as long as the areas are non-combat zones. The guidelines for the US-Japan alliance were renewed for enhanced co-operation. Japan assumed a role in regional leadership through multilateralism (Hughes, 2015b). The renewal of the US-Japan alliance materialised in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Japan rapidly ratified the relevant temporary measures through its constitutional reinterpretation, which allowed the dispatch of the SDF overseas besides PKOs under the Junichiro Koizumi administration (Miyagi, 2009). His assertive stance is often viewed as one of the catalysts for enlarging Japan's capability and role in the international system (Heazle, 2009; Kliman, 2006). This is exemplified by the Cabinet's decision to develop BMD and its subsequent deployment in the face of North Korean missile threat. This is also the era when the notion that Japan has been on the path of 're-militarisation' or 'normalisation' resurfaced in light of its attempt to expand its role and strengthen its military capabilities (Hughes, 2004a; Oros, 2008; Pyle, 2007; Samuels, 2007).

However, since 2004, the gradual, incremental development had seemed to halt because of domestic political chaos, which was thought to have settled due to Koizumi's long term. Six prime ministers served in six years between 2006 and 2012, during which no conceivable development was seen. Subsequently, almost all significant political agendas, including security areas, were aborted (Mochizuki & Parkinson Porter, 2013).

Then again, the sudden upsurge of security policy transformation restarted in 2012 in tandem with the re-elected Prime Minister Abe, whose revisionist and nationalist stance is often the target of media coverage (Nakanishi, 2015). He established the National Security Council (NSC), the role of which is equivalent to the US NSC. CSD was finally allowed through the reinterpretation of the constitution to stretch the definition of self-defence, despite tumultuous opposition from the public and other political parties (T. N. Watanabe, 2016). Japan seems more receptive to China and North Korea because they intensified their aggressive stance (Schulze, 2016).

As one can see, while the incremental trend of Japan's security development is observed, its velocity has never been stable. Many theoretical predictions are inconsistent and therefore constitute a central research puzzle in this thesis. The following section traces several key theoretical views on Japan's behaviour based on three key questions: (1) what drives Japan, (2) how does it achieve its security and (3) where is it heading?

2.2 Motivations for Japan to Behave as It Does

It seems that researchers' interests in investigating motivations for Japan to behave as it does have remained strongly. While almost all the literature no longer denies the upward trend of Japan's active involvement in international security, motivations and interpretations of which are ever more diversifying.

Realism

The first school of IR theory that aims to capture the development of security policy in Japan is realism with its applied or developed approaches. Given that conventional structural realism sees Japan as a 'structural anomaly' with its discrepancy between economic and security might, realist scholars have tended to pursue explanatory power to account for its behaviour within the realist paradigm (Layne, 1993; Waltz, 1993). However, the post-Cold War era saw the development of Japan's security policy with its active participation in international security along with developed military capabilities. This is often characterised as 're-militarisation' (Hook, 1996; Hughes, 2009; Takao, 2008). Such a discussion has occurred within the framework of 'normalisation' in that 'abnormal' seems to evaporate gradually (Cooney, 2013; Oros, 2008; Soeya *et al.*, 2011). Nonetheless, interpretations of such a trend have been substantially diverse amongst realist scholars.

Offensive realism has asserted that the reason for the security–economy disparity stems from the continuously presented opportunity for Japan to 'free-ride' or 'buck-pass' through the US security alliance (Lind, 2004). On the other hand, defensive realists have posited that in the pursuit of 'minimum necessary' defensive capabilities, the development of Japan's security policy focuses on augmenting defensive capabilities with the necessary degree of commitment to maintain the US alliance. In a similar vein, Midford (2002) and Kawasaki (2001) argued that 'reassurance' through buck-passing is the key to understanding Japan's security policy, which is not uncommon in a state that has a strong alliance. Thus, the strategy of 'reassurance' is to minimise defence capabilities to mediate the security dilemma while maintaining the US alliance to secure the channel of buck-passing to balance against the rise of China.

Concerning the concept of strategic culture that navigates state behaviour, Japan is characterised in many ways. Snyder (1977, p. 8) defined strategic culture as 'the sum

total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behaviour that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation'. For those who analyse Japan through the lens of defensive realism, Japan is 'mercantile realism' (Heginbotham & Samuels, 1998). To offensive realists, Japan is seen as 'a circumscribed balancer' (Lind, 2004). Michael J. Green (2001) characterised the change in security posture from mercantile realism to a more active role, along with the change in the strategic environment as 'reluctant realism'. Similarly, Kliman (2006) has seen Japan as 'transitional realism'. Having looked at more accelerated development in recent years, Auslin (2017) went as far as to say that Japan detached itself from the above realist characterisations and initiated a 'new realism' towards a more conventional classical realist type of behaviour. Other studies have combined the element of history and the growing nationalism and term Japan as 'resentful realism' (Hughes, 2012, 2015a, 2016). In sum, while realists have emphasised structural forces and systemic stimuli, increasingly more scholars have paid attention to domestic politics to seek a better explanation.

Constructivism

Constructivism, as another mainstream approach in the field of Japan's IR, has contributed to enhancing our understanding of Japan's behaviour. Its emphasis on the role, norms and identity of foreign policy-making has succeeded in highlighting the 'static elements' of Japan's security policy. Japan is characterised by the static nature of 'anti-militarism' and 'pacifism' rooted in WWII and historical memories against the use of force (Berger, 1996; Hagström, 2014; Katzenstein, 2008; Katzenstein & Okawara, 1993; Oros, 2008). Katzenstein (1996) has examined this issue and highlighted how norms constitute collective identity, leading to a particular choice of security policy in Japan: antimilitarism. Rather than structural impacts, he has identified that 'social and legal' norms have a mutually constitutive impact on constructing collective identities to shape security policy in Japan. By social and legal norms, he has meant the constitution (Article 9) and its interpretation of legal norms and anti-militarism for social norms. As Katzenstein (1996, p. 25) has argued, 'the 1990s witnessed a strong turn toward sociological styles of analysis that highlights the importance of norms and identity'.

While his thesis is largely in line with Katzenstein's, Berger (1996) focused on 'politico-military' relations and cultural norms in comparison with Germany. He traced how the public perception of the military (establishment) in both countries changed in

the pre- and post-Cold War period and argued there was a dramatic shift from praising the military to blaming it for all the ‘wrong-doing’ during the war. This negative perception has been firmly institutionalised through demilitarisation and entrenched in political elites. Therefore, Japan chose to separate the ‘military establishment’ from the public, leading to the tight bureaucratic and civilian control over it. Although he admitted the structural impact on the development of Japan’s security policy during the Cold War period, the outcome of the policy is widely constrained by anti-militaristic sentiment. Consequently, the defence strategy and security policy of Japan were far from what they were supposed to be according to liberalism and realism.

Given the post-Cold War transformation of Japan’s security policy, posing a challenge against such a norm-based interpretation, increasing attention has been paid to ‘emotion’ to IR—and Japan is no exception. Hagström and Gustafsson (2015) introduced the concept of ‘relational identity’ with which Japan’s IR has been shaped by the particular influence of its neighbours. Moreover, the current strategic environment with the rise of China put Japan in an ‘identity crisis’, whereby its identity is challenged, negotiated and evolved through the supplement of ‘norm entrepreneurs’. Hagström (2015) argued that issues concerning the relative position among Japan, China and South/North Korea in the 2000s provided a window of opportunity for norm entrepreneurs to discredit the ‘peace-loving nation’ or ‘pacifist’. Hagström and Gustafsson (2015) advocated the rationale that these identities are the prime cause of bullying by neighbouring countries. Relational identity provides a scope for investigation with constructivists to adapt to the changing environment and how it plays a role in reshaping Japan’s identity and hence security policy.

Liberalism

In comparison, liberalism within IR theory has not been widely applied to Japan, which nevertheless has a similar approach of constructivism through a domestic-oriented examination. From the perspective of liberalism, Japan’s security development since the end of the Cold War, such as the dispatch of the SDF to UN PKOs, is not a sign of remilitarisation but a renewed stance of promoting democratic values and enhancing international security. In this view, Japan has shifted from a ‘domestically’ peace-loving nation with a low international profile to a global nation. Berger, Mochizuki and Tsuchiyama (2007) have claimed Japan is an ‘adaptive state’, and within liberal philosophy, Japan has adapted to the change in the international system in such a

marked way. Japan compromised the trade friction with the US in the 1980s, and in the 1990s, Japan stepped out to be a more active player in the international security. Berger (2007) therefore has argued that the rationale of Japan's development of security policy is not a way of maximising its national power in a realist sense but of bolstering international security. This is pretty much why Japan has seriously embarked on 'human security' together with official development assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment (FDI) (Edström, 2003; Ho, 2008).

Other approaches and eclecticism

Beyond the IR theories, many scholars extract some elements of theory-driven motivators to Japan's behaviour that is examined through foreign policy analysis or analytical eclecticism. For instance, actor-focused analysis grew rapidly with Koizumi's popularity; many studies argued his resources were amplified to influence security policy-making (M. J. Green, 2006; Kabashima & Steel, 2007; Miyagi, 2009; Mulgan, 2002; Pempel, 2007; Shinoda, 2007; Uchiyama, 2013). A further upsurge to revise the constitution is seen in the second Abe administration (Hiroshi, 2009; Howe & Campbell, 2013; Iwama, 2013; Kakizaki, 2015).

With the assumption that leaders or policymakers critically influence security policy, many studies have confirmed that political reforms enhanced the concentration of power in the Cabinet and the prime minister (Envall, 2015; Reed, McElwain & Shimizu, 2009; Shinoda, 2000, 2011). In studies of Japanese domestic politics, this is rather a significant departure from the past because bureaucrats had long been considered to hold dominant power over policy-making (C. Hosoya, 1974; Johnson, 1995; Kaarbo, 1997; Krauss & Pekkanen, 2011; Stockwin, 2008). This is also compounded by the fact that institutional reforms occurred whereby the Defence Agency (DA) has been upgraded to ministerial status (Schulze, 2016). Likewise, a unique but robust claim was made by Catalinac (2016, p. 2) that electoral reform, occurring in 1994, fundamentally altered the way of constructing security policy. The reform 'compels candidates/politicians shift their strategies from pork for the district to policies for the nation' (Catalinac, 2016, p. 2). Therefore, the current strategic environment, including North Korean threats and the rise of China, was effectively incorporated into the election campaign strategy, creating a rather persuasive discourse impacting security policy formation.

2.3 A Means to Achieve Security

Although many of the studies overlap the previous ‘why’ question approach, the essence of this type of study addresses how Japan has achieved and will/should achieve security. There are many studies indicating that the US-Japan alliance is the best way to achieve security (Berger, 2004; Dian, 2014; Michael J. Green & Cooper, 2014; Osius, 2002; Penn, 2014; Rozman, 2015; Wirth, 2015). For instance, Mochizuki (2007, pp. 759-766) introduced four patterns in Japan’s strategic options for China through the US alliance: ‘cooperative engagement with a soft hedge’, ‘balancing and containment’, ‘strategic accommodation’ and ‘competitive engagement with a hard hedge’. Most of the studies fall into one of the four categories. Fels (2017, p. 507) argued the continuity of ‘warm ties with Washington and cold politics with China’ is the prime means to balance. Japan increasingly has strengthened its security ties with Washington, and its strategy falls into that of Washington’s pivot towards Asia to balance against a rising China. Satake (2016, p. 28) noted the newly upgraded US-Japan Defence Cooperation Guidelines include Australia for the first time with the specification of ‘actions and roles’. Thus, he argued that strengthening the ‘institutionalisation of the trade-off between reassurance and burden-sharing’ is key.

Many scholars similarly have paid attention to specific military/defence means to balance (Bee Yun, 2016; Eldridge, 2017; Sado, 2015). Samuels (1994) investigated the so-called techno-nationalism and relevant defence production. Maritime security studies often are the scope of such studies (Black, 2014; Graham, 2006; Pajon, 2017; Patalano, 2012, 2015). Some have argued Japan has embarked on an arms race through cyber and space security (Kallender & Hughes, 2017; Pekkanen, 2013; Pekkanen & Kallender-Umezu, 2010), while others have focused on more specific military capabilities such as BMD (Hughes, 2004b, 2013; Swaine, Swanger & Kawakami, 2001)

Other scholars have suggested a level of detachment from the US. Tan (2015) claimed that Japan’s expanded engagement in international security has focused recently more on multilateralism in Asia than the US alliance. That Japan has attempted to exclude the US, such as the East Asia Summit in 2005, is a sign of normalisation with expanded multilateral diplomacy. Y. Hosoya (2015) saw the package of security bills as the mark of the advancement of ‘internationalising’ Japan’s security policy and therefore greater co-operation with the armies of other countries should be possible—even with the Chinese People’s Liberation Army as long as it sticks to PKOs (Singh, 2016). Nakanishi

(2015), in contrast, proposed a somewhat unique means to realise Japan's interests: entrenching economic and political ties with India, the Middle East and Africa given a growing geopolitical shift from the Asian continent to the Eurasian littoral and maritime areas with arguably more economic and political opportunities. Recent studies emphasised different approaches, arguing that Japan's soft power is the means for enhancing international profile (Drifte, 1996; Iwabuchi, 2016).

2.4 Where Is Japan Headed?

There are diverse interpretations regarding Japan's future. Concerning the security policy after passing the CSD bill, Hughes (2017) predicted that the implication of lifting the ban on CSD increases the likelihood of US 'entanglement' due to the de facto prohibition of using Article 9 to refuse the US request to dispatch the SDF. This echoes the extensive research on the constitutional revision. Boyd and Samuels (2005, p. 62) argued that with the case of Germany and Japan, 'saying "no" because one cannot and saying "no" because one won't are not the same thing and can have different consequences for alliance relations'.

There are two competing short-term predictions regarding the Abe administration. On the one hand, Hughes (2015a) provided a comprehensive picture of the Abe administration's aim, ranging from security policy to historical issues to personal ideological issues, and found contradictory relations between these areas, suggesting the high probability of failing to accomplish his aims such as the constitutional revision. On the other hand, Sebata (2015) projected a strong possibility of constitutional revision due to the election result (obtaining a majority in both Houses) and the stability of the LDP (under Abe's leadership). Hughes (2016) and Saltzman (2015) both saw a somewhat constrained, hedged balancing strategy against China despite Japan's upward trend for 'hard balancing'. The most recent studies have considered the potential impact of the result of the 2016 US presidential election, which emphasises a greater uncertainty of the future trajectory of Japan's security policy (Lam, 2017b; S. A. Smith, 2017).

Some scholars have attempted to project a mid-term trajectory. Easley (2017) argued that Japan is moving towards 'a normal country' in an incremental sense with growing 'proactivity'. He predicted that Japan would continue to shape its security policy based on incremental adjustment under domestic and international constraints, and the

US-Japan is unlikely to pursue aggressive militarising. Dudden (2016) argued that two cultures historically have shaped and will shape the country's security policy; 'inward-looking and tightly defined one or as open-ended and engaged with the world' (p. 101), although Japan has leant towards the latter with the advent of 'a new era of maritime imperialism' (p. 100). The US-Japan likely will engage in balancing.

More fundamentally, the once rejected premise based on Waltzian theory has recently surfaced again. That is, Japan would in the future possess nuclear weapons (Samuels & Schoff, 2014; Yoshino, 2016). Such a discussion has been in the media (Corr, 2017; Kingston, 2017; Prasad, 2016) and even in the national diet debate (Diet, 2016), suggestive that the option goes beyond a pure academic existence.

2.5 Key Variables with Missing Links and a Research Puzzle

Overall, Japan's security policy certainly seems on the incremental trajectory with enlarged roles. However, its 'velocity' of upward security policy development is hardly captured or accounted for. To be precise, it has a temperamental and inconsistent speed of security policy development despite a constant aggravation of the strategic environment. The questions are 'What leads Japan to accelerate and decelerate its incremental security policy development?' and 'How do several key factors interplay and shape such a development?'.

Existing theoretical views on 'what drives Japan' are insufficient to highlight the relative weight of key variables such as structure, individuals and the constitution. For realism, while the influence of structure is clearly highlighted, it does not provide a nuanced account for Japan with its complex unit-level factors. On the other hand, constructivism can incorporate domestic 'hurdles', such as the constitution, into its analysis (Katzenstein, 1996). When it seems structural change occurs, it cannot reconcile the contentious interplay between structure and domestic factors (Hughes, 2015). These difficulties indeed prevent us from advancing the analysis further to investigate how Japan aims to achieve its security and where it is heading. Eclectic approaches and other studies with a specific focus on a particular factor, such as the prime minister, can provide a spot-on analysis, whereas these are unable to settle the debates on when/under what conditions Japan accelerates/decelerates its security policy development.

The above literature review shows there are many attributes regarding Japan's unpredictable speed of policy development, which include the prime minister, bureaucrats, the public, and the constitution and its interpretations. Numerous research puzzles arise around them. Is the prime minister so critical in shaping Japan's security policy, particularly since Abe came to power for the second time in 2012? How do bureaucrats who were once considered to control all the policy-making dimensions play a role in security policy now? Has Japan been just a follower of US strategic behaviours? How has the strategic environment, with threats such as North Korea and China, influenced Japan? To what extent do the pacifist constitution and its interpretation, particularly Article 9, come into play now as a guardian to prevent Japan from being 'normal'? Does the socially accepted norm of anti-militarism amongst the public also have a specific role in formulating security policy? The research area in this debate is well summarised by Envall (2003, pp.8): it is 'whether these obstacles [domestic factors] are greater than Japan's foreign policy potential [in response to the security environment]'. On this matter, it is worthwhile to examine the relative weight of the contentious factors, shaping Japanese security policy in a rigorous theoretical framework.

To examine these factors comprehensively, the thesis primarily scrutinises the two cases of policy-making process: (1) the constitutional revision/reinterpretation debate with a specific focus on CSD to trace a change in legal security capacity and (2) BMD to investigate the development of military capabilities. CSD had been long prohibited under the constitutional interpretation of Article 9 since its establishment in 1951. Many debates proceeded around the constitutional revision and reinterpretation. It is arguably the most significant constraint on Japan's security policy because it largely restricts Japan's external balancing options. BMD is the first strategic weapon Japan acquired in 2004. It is the first time for Japan since WWII to acquire such a weapon to directly address a strategic missile. These two case studies fit the purpose of the thesis. The main research task is to investigate under what conditions Japan accelerates/decelerates its balancing behaviour. Both cases are developed continuously during the period between 2004 and 2018. More importantly, these are the prime factors that allow us to examine the degree of balancing behaviour.

On the one hand, CSD allows Japan not only to engage more in external balancing but also potentially radically revise the constitution, which could enable Japan to possess offensive capabilities to jump in an arms race as internal balancing. Because these

balancing behaviours are largely restricted, reinterpretation or revision is a clear sign of how Japan would engage in the strategic environment and its threats. On the other hand, BMD is principally for internal balancing by beefing up defensive capabilities—often captured in the debate of the offence–defence balance (Jervis, 1976). The degree to which Japan develops its defence system indicates whether the country theoretically shows a balancing behaviour vis-à-vis China and North Korea, both of which possess ICBM and medium-range ballistic missiles. Furthermore, looking at BMD could also enable us to examine as to whether Japan is engaged in counter-balancing through offensive capabilities. This is because part of the BMD system potentially consists of ‘pre-emptive strike’ and ‘counter-strike capability’, which requires offensive capabilities such as aircraft carriers and cruise missiles. Because Japan did not possess these capabilities when it started deploying BMD, the investigation of BMD development regarding systems and military equipment helps us delineate its balancing behaviour.

The second purpose of this thesis is to examine causal mechanisms between the structure and policy outcome (BMD and the constitution) through the calculation of domestic politics (the intervening variables). The two cases are deeply connected with both the structure and domestic politics. For the first case, constitutional reinterpretation and revision must go through the ‘domestic policy-making’ process because the reinterpretation requires the enactment of a law, which requires securing two-thirds of seats in the Lower House, while the revision requires a national referendum (Neary, 2002). More importantly, the ruling party has an authority to initiate the process of law-making or the revision which allows us to look at leaders’ image, including the prime minister (Shinoda, 2013). Furthermore, the constitution itself is a ‘domestic institution’, which constrains Japan’s policy development. It is, then, possible to examine the extent to which institutionalised forms of anti-militarism, such as the constitution, are relevant.

Similarly, BMD widens our scope of domestic factors. Because it is the military side of security policy, the broad direction of the Cabinet is executed by bureaucrats. This enables us to examine how they influence security policy-making because it is not necessarily about law-making that needs public support. The comparison of the two cases lets us further elaborate on the analysis regarding the influence of the public. By tracing the two cases to determine the extent to which these variables mitigate the impact and signals given by the structure—specifically, ‘when’ and ‘how’—the thesis aims to account for the temperamental nature of Japan’s balancing behaviour.

The two cases ultimately help to address the third purpose of the thesis: determining the relative weight of each intervening variable in explaining ‘when’ and ‘how’ each intervening variable is present or absent in the two cases. The comparison of the two cases helps us to investigate the purported influence of the domestically spread anti-militarism norm. During the period between 2004 and 2018, there were six prime ministers between 2006 and 2012 and a seventh from 2012 onwards, which also provides insight into how the role of the prime minister shapes Japan’s balancing behaviour. The constitution obviously restricts BMD but not like CSD. It can examine how/if the role of the constitution differs when directly challenged for amending and when it directly restricts Japan’s security policy.

The following chapter outlines a theoretical framework before empirically examining key factors (intervening variables) and how these are responsible for shaping Japan’s behaviour in tandem with the changing strategic environment. It uses NCR as a prime theoretical framework with process tracing as a methodology and explains how NCR can be a useful framework to achieve the three purposes in this thesis: (1) determining under what conditions Japan accelerates/decelerates its balancing behaviour, (2) investigating the causal mechanisms of the key factors, and (3) identifying the relative weight of each factor.

3 Theoretical Framework

This PhD thesis employs NCR as a theoretical framework to test its theoretical consistency in the case of Japan. The fundamental importance of NCR lies in its ambitious attempt to incorporate domestic variables into a structural realist framework to account for why states behave not as predicted by realism by conceptualising and investigating the impacts of intervening variables of foreign policy. The purpose of this section is multifold. First, the section not only explains the overall theoretical paradigm of the thesis but also argues why NCR is chosen amongst other theories—in particular, it sheds light on the theoretical void between structural realism and constructivism. Second, given the notion there is no ‘single form of realism’, but many branches of realism, this chapter revisits the discussion as to how structure incentives with states to act in a certain way. Third, it attempts to address the NCR’s most critiqued weakness—an ad hoc application of variables—by providing a solid relationship between structure and foreign policy outcome with well-defined intervening variables on an ex-ante basis. Fourth, towards a full operationalisation of NCR and theory testing as a meaningful theoretical endeavour in the case of Japan, the section aims to conceptualise intervening variables with a clear hypothesis by investigating and employing the literature on Japan’s security policy.

3.1 Neoclassical Realism: What Is It, What Is Its Purpose and Why Has It Been Chosen?

This section explains the theoretical paradigm of NCR in comparison with the branches of realism and other conventional IR theories to clarify its seemingly fuzzy concepts due to the overlapping characteristics of other theories. It also aims to clarify the purpose of the theory, why it is selected and how it can be what Schweller (2003, p. 315) calls ‘a progressive research programme’ with potential to enhance our understanding of how states act.

What Is Neoclassical Realism?

The term ‘neoclassical realism’ was coined by Rose (1998) who collated the cumulative realist literature, focusing on domestic politics to theorise them into a consolidated research programme. Referencing the Waltzian school of thought, NCR attempts to incorporate first image and second image variables while appreciating international

structure and its implications to provide a better and well-informed account for states' behaviour. NCR emerged from the growing frustration about neo-realism's inability to predict and explain states' response to international structure and the problems of its nature of determinism. NCR shares the fundamental assumption of neo-realism that structure and the relative distribution of power are by far the most influential in states' foreign policy. However, NCR views structural incentives as not 'absolute' but rather mediated by domestic factors (Rose, 1998). NCR, therefore, is designed to address the shortcomings of neo-realism.

Successive failures of neo-realist literature, such as causes of the end of the Cold War, stem from four fundamental factors omitted in neo-realism that are considered within the NCR research paradigm (Ripsman *et al.*, 2016, p. 19). The first factor concerns the perception-and-misperception debate. Many have criticised how neo-realism fails to incorporate the fact that leaders are not always receptive to structure. In other words, leaders misperceive signals given by structure (Robert Jervis, 1976, pp. 28-31). Such misperceptions mainly result from leaders' 'cognitive filter' (Blainey, 1988, pp. 35-36), information asymmetry (Robert Jervis, 1988), or personality or belief (Renshon & Renshon, 2008). The second factor is associated with 'signals' provided by the structure, meaning the absence of clarity regarding opportunities to maximise security and threats (Lobell, Taliaferro & Ripsman, 2012). For instance, Friedberg (2005) argues it was unclear whether the rise of China in the post-Cold War era was a substantial threat to the US, in which case, strategic options might vary and suggest that outcomes of foreign policy choices are simply outside the realm of international structure.

The third factor concerns rationality. Although rationality is not necessarily predicated on the assumption of neo-realism, the fact that states should respond to structure in conjunction with neorealist theoretical predictions subsumes the rationality of leaders (Friedberg, 2005). Thus, NCR contemplates that it can be a reasonable scenario where leaders make irrational decisions, despite perfectly recognising the rational strategic options. The final factor concerns the functionality of states, which is assumed not to take any precedence on states' behaviour by neorealism (Ripsman *et al.*, 2016). Functionality refers to a government's ability and capability to produce the same policy outcome as neorealist's prediction by optimally responding to the structure. For instance, given the supreme impact of structure on states, domestic constraints—be they the public or decision-making process—are not immediate imperatives for states' behaviour.

When it comes to the question of what NCR is, the aim is to address the four fundamental factors omitted in neo-realism without jeopardising its core assumption. NCR, therefore, is a theory of realist-oriented foreign policy.

What Is the Purpose of Neoclassical Realism?

Although the fundamental purposes of NCR are mentioned in the previous section, the way in which NCR is applied varies to a significant degree depending on how we set the independent variable. In other words, approaches of NCR may differ as to what is explained. This section attempts to sort out the existing NCR-oriented studies to clarify not only their purpose of application of NCR but also the NCR approach to this thesis.

The first purpose of NCR application is complementary to neo-realism because its approach is to explain anomalies, such as a particular country's behaviour in a particular time and space. A quintessential example is Randal Schweller's (2004) work concerning 'underbalancing', meaning the failure to balance against threats properly. The overexpansion of imperial states such as Germany and Japan falls in this category—such a behaviour makes it unlikely to maintain states' security in the long run (J. L. Snyder, 1991). Thus, independent variables are a particular (abnormal) decision of states. Other works examine why weaker states wage war against stronger states (Blainey, 1988, pp. 115-124) and why states occasionally engage in intervention in 'peripheral areas' in terms of inconsistency with states' national interests (Taliaferro, 2004). One key consistent assumption of this approach is that as Zakaria (1992, pp. 190-191) points out, neo-realism is normally sufficient to explain states' behaviour. Hence, it functions as a complementary study to neo-realist research paradigms. Furthermore, this type of works often focuses on leaders' perception or actions due to its scope of particular time or decision; therefore, arguably the most 'classical' element of realism is subsumed under a neo-realism research programme.

The scope and factors shaping states' behaviours are multiplied when it comes to the second approach of NCR, which aims to explain a broader range of 'strategic options' or what one may call 'grand strategy' (Ripsman *et al*, 2016). This approach is predicated on the assumption—different from the first one—that unless states have little choice given the clear signals of threats, states may choose a range of options circumscribed by structure but not dictated. Another critical assumption is that signals from structure are

rarely clear, which produces a constantly uncertain situation in which states cannot have clear information a priori to make decisions. Independent variables, in this case, are in relation to ‘grand strategy formation’ or its ‘adjustment’. As will be discussed later, ‘grand strategy’, defined by Kennedy (1991, pp. ix-ix), refers to states that ‘sought to integrate their overall political, economic, and military aims and thus to preserve their long-term interests’.

Other key variables mediating the impact of structure are found within the NCR literature. Dueck (2006) argues that elites and leaders’ idea to perceive information is biased. Such information processing is often filtered through ‘strategic culture’, which refers to a culturally transmitted practice largely shared by the public or the elites (Kitchen, 2010). Zakaria’s (1998) ‘state mobilisation model’ contends that states’ behaviour depends on their ability to harness national resources, such as consensus of the public and policy-making process and relevant political institutions. In a similar vein, Tsebelis (2002) argues that a state’s unique political institutions and policy-making structure create a ‘veto player’ that, despite its institutionally small power, plays a crucial role in policy-making. Furthermore, Allison and Zelikow (1999) examine the organisational and bureaucratic structure of foreign policy-making and its impact upon outcomes. The central focus is the so-called ‘transmission belt’ through which structural impediments are translated into states’ behaviour. Constituting a subset of domestic factors, this is often defined as ‘intervening variables’ (Rose, 1998). As Ripsman *et al.* (2016) note, most NCR studies employ this approach with the view to explaining a state’s strategy formation, which is also the central theoretical focus of this thesis (see Figure 3.1).

Approaches of NCR differ depending on their respective purpose and dependent variable with different assumptions that are overlooked in relation to the application of NCR. In this thesis, the second approach is employed with the assumption that states often have to choose a grand strategy, incentivised by structure, from among several options; however, in the process of grand strategy formation, particularities of domestic politics may have a substantial influence and give us crucial guidance to analyse states’ behaviour. The following section attempts to clarify and conceptualise the key variables (dependent, independent and intervening).

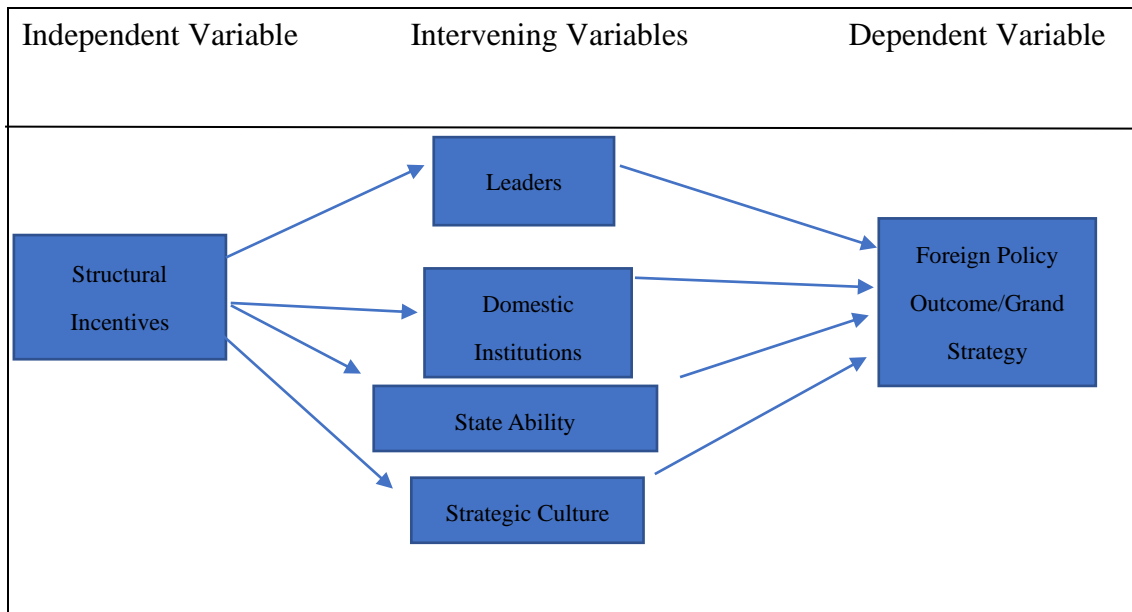


Figure 3.1 Basic Interaction of NCR Variables

Why Choose Neoclassical Realism and Not Other Theories?

The above basic understanding of the assumptions and approaches of NCR notwithstanding, one might ponder its overlapping characteristics with other theories and its theoretical inconsistency, such as constructivism (norms and identity) and liberalism (domestic-oriented focus), as well as other IR concepts (Coetzee & Hudson, 2012). In this section, alleged theoretical flaws are addressed in comparison with other theories, and potential theoretical contributions made by NCR are discussed for its selection as a theoretical framework. In short, NCR provides a clear hierarchical relationship amongst key factors in shaping a state's behaviour, which allows us to examine the relative weight of them. This fits into the purpose of this thesis: examining several domestic factors in Japan's security policy in relation to the structure.

First, one would immediately question the overlapping feature of NCR with *innenpolitik* in the sense that both emphasise the significance of domestic politics. *Innenpolitik* posits that the fundamental component in shaping states' behaviour is domestic constraints, such as economic interests of leaders or their diversion from expected behaviours (Fordham, 1998). It is true that NCR holds a similar view of domestic politics. However, one of the critical flaws of *innenpolitik*, as Ripsman *et al.* (2016) argue, is that empirical studies suggest states' behaviour can differ depending on structure, even for states with similar domestic political situations. In other words, *innenpolitik* approaches cannot answer why states with similar functions or

governments act differently (Zakaria, 1998). By privileging international structure, NCR can produce a more nuanced picture of states' behaviour and address the weakness of the *innenpolitik* approach. Moreover, NCR approaches domestic politics more systemically than *innenpolitik*. NCR gives a well-set analytical lens through the intervening variables, such as state mobilisation and state-society relations.

On the other hand, some note the theoretical inconsistency of NCR with neo-realism as it departs at the point where NCR incorporates domestic components into its research paradigm (Rose, 1998). However, it is safe to say this view is wrong. The first theoretical concern, as Waltz (1979, p. 71) himself admits, is that structure 'can tell us what pressures are exerted and what possibilities are posed by systems of different structure, but it cannot tell us just how, and how effectively, the units of a system will respond to those pressures and possibilities'. Given the increasing indeterminacy of structure provided by realism and uncertainty in the international system, NCR can be a power-mediating theory between *innenpolitik* and neo-realism. Betts (1982, p. 103) simplifies this matter by saying that 'the greater the ambiguity, the greater the impact of perceptions'.

The second theoretical concern is a matter of 'rationalism'. NCR rejects the notion of rationality, inconsistent with the neo-realism assumption. However, as it was argued, neo-realism first does not hold that states are all 'rational'. Furthermore, Kitchen (2010, p. 121) argues that with a neo-realist way of treating historical anomalies, one must ask 'at what point do actors cease to be non-rational?'. Schweller (2004) similarly argues that NCR can provide an answer as to the line between states choosing to balance and states adapting band-wagoning, appeasement and buck-passing as the outcome depends on domestic politics while structure only gives incentives and options of how to respond. Finally, Layne (2006, p. 11) maintains that the elegance of neo-realism—parsimony—is lost when it comes to NCR. As with others, this thesis sees it as an 'exchange' of the value of theory (Foulon, 2015, p. 638) and 'trade-off of rigour and parsimony in favour of richness and detail' (Wohlforth, 1993, p. 15) as a necessary compromise and not a complete discard of these theoretical essences. Schweller (2003, p. 317) also gives a supportive view that in referencing Lakatos—who defined 'research programme'—the values of a theory are to produce 'cumulative knowledge' and 'address important questions about foreign policy and national behaviour'.

Arguably, the most contentious debate occurs when NCR is compared with

constructivism in the usage of ideas, norms and cultures. Wendt's (1992) well-quoted constructivist notion— 'anarchy is what states make of it'—clearly contradicts the realist tradition of the supremacy of structure and the existence of 'objective reality'. This is exactly why James (2009, p. 259) calls NCR 'realist-inspired constructivism'. Thus, there is an epistemological conundrum when it comes to the matter of prior existence of structure.

A close look reveals the fundamental difference between NCR and constructivism through the origin of NCR, borne from neo-realism. That is, in NCR, ideas matter to the extent to which states choose options delineated by structure and the international system. Therefore, unlike constructivism, with the implication that states' behaviour could be anything as long as it is consistent with states' identity or norms, NCR posits that structure first and foremost limits states' behaviour and yet there are several choices in which ideas help states make decisions. NCR also views the nature of structure as conflictual (Schweller, 2003). According to Foulon (2015, p. 639), NCR questions how ideas—subsumed under the state-level variables—'interfere between systemic incentives and future foreign policy'. He continues that critical difference and strength of NCR over constructivism is its 'forward-looking approach' with a level of predictability, which constructivism lacks due to its past-oriented stance. Nonetheless, epistemological inconsistency remains: idealism versus materialism. This thesis stands on Kitchen's (2010) argument that IR theory should not be 'overly concerned with epistemology and ontology' (2010, p. 85). Instead, NCR focuses on the question of when ideational variables come into play against materialistic variables within the international system for the pursuit of greater explanatory power without violating realist assumptions and predictability.

NCR can be said to share some conceptions of liberalism that appear to be the theoretical inconsistency of realism per se; however, this view is mistaken. NCR explicitly employs a multilayered theoretical framework to connect agents and structure, the latter of which is defined in realist terms. There are several branches of liberalism, including democratic peace theory and Putnam's two-level game.

Liberal democratic peace theory and NCR share a common feature: both consider ideology and domestic institutions as important intervening variables, although for liberal peace theory these should be confined to 'democratic' states (Owen, 1996). However, the attitudes towards structure are radically different. In liberal democratic

peace theory, units constitute an 'international system' of liberal democratic countries so that non-democratic states are largely excluded. As a result, the scope of LDP theory is heavily limited (Coetzee & Hudson, 2012). Moreover, states' behaviour in liberal democratic peace theory is 'bottom-up'. Instead, NCR provides a more encompassing view and theorisation of interaction between structure and agents in a top-down manner (Coetzee & Hudson, 2012).

Second, two-level game theory has some similarities to NCR. As Alons (2010, p. 6-8) argues, it attempts to provide a theoretical framework within which both external and internal factors are incorporated. However, Foulon (2015) pinpoints several weaknesses of the theory that NCR can overcome. First, for two-level game theory, a channel between the domestic and external levels of analysis is not established. The only connection between these levels is individuals who assume the role of negotiation. Second, the two-level game theory fails to clarify the relative weight of the external/internal dichotomy. Most fundamentally, both liberalist theories assume that policy-making is 'bottom-up', which is a view not held by NCR or conventional branches of realism.

Based on the discussion above, one can see that there is a clear distinction among NCR, theoretical eclecticism and foreign policy studies. On the one hand, unlike eclecticism, NCR carefully treats ideas and institutions in a way that preserves the core assumption of neo-realism. On the other hand, although NCR arguably derives from foreign policy studies, NCR departs from it by incorporating structural influence in its analytical framework. Furthermore, NCR sets more specific approaches than foreign policy studies by defining core intervening variables. By differentiating other theories and discussing their weaknesses that NCR can overcome, the application of NCR is a useful theoretical endeavour to address the empirical puzzles systemically.

The link between structure and foreign policy outcome through intervening variables

Having discussed the strengths and resolved some alleged theoretical inconsistencies of NCR compared with other theories, NCR itself is susceptible to criticism. To begin with, Walt (2002, p. 211) argues that NCR tends to incorporate intervening variables in an ad hoc manner and is incapable of providing hypotheses. He also criticises that NCR has yet to identify the relative weight of each intervening variable, which, by definition,

results in the absence of predictability and generalizability. Vasquez (1997) claims NCR has its degenerative nature to the realist research paradigm in that the theoretical parsimony of realism with predictive values is largely neglected. NCR is also criticised for the utilisation of too many (irrelevant) variables, suggestive of the possibility of ‘theoretical overdetermination’. It is hard to deny that some NCR studies may deserve such critiques.

This section attempts to overcome the above critiques. First, it discusses how neo-realist conceptions of system, structure and power are employed in NCR with consideration of ‘structural modifiers’. Second, to resolve the critique of ‘lack of predictive values’, it introduces the concept of the ‘permissive/restrictive strategic environment’ through which a level of prediction can be made. Third, a clear-cut explanation is given as to how structural incentives are translated into intervening variables to produce a foreign policy outcome based on the prior definition to avoid the ‘ad hoc application’ of intervening variables. This enables us to formulate hypotheses to test against the existing theoretical explanations. Finally, a well-defined and differentiated functionality of each intervening variable is provided, and, in conjunction with the permissive/restrictive strategic environment, a general guideline specifies the relative weight of each intervening variable.

3.2 Structure, System, Structural Modifiers and Power (Balancing)

Structure

NCR employs Waltz’s (1979, p. 71) concept of structure: (1) its ordering principle (the ‘first-tier’ or ‘deep structure’), meaning how the units stand in relation to one another; (2) the degree of differentiation, or lack thereof, among the units (the ‘second-tier’); and (3) the distribution of capabilities among the units (the ‘third-tier’ or ‘surface structure’). It is important to note that NCR and neo-realism differ on the assumptions regarding the degree to which material capabilities influence states’ behaviour. NCR stipulates that such capabilities do not simply dictate states. Waltz (1979, p. 93) argues that ‘hierarchy entails relations of super- and subordination among a system’s parts’. While neo-realism posits that the combination of the three elements of structure creates a hierarchical relationship among states, it predicates the vertical aspects of such a hierarchy as material capabilities, and its differentiation among units determine the way in which they interact in the system. However, through the pursuit of developing neo-realism,

NCR tries to incorporate the horizontal element of units' interaction—what G. H. Snyder (1996) calls the 'structural modifiers'. These help us to engage in the complexity of the units' socialisation process more critically.

System

Although structure in neo-realism is widely debated and defined clearly by Waltz, 'system' has been paid relatively less attention (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). A system is akin to the conceptualisation of the world because it depends on theoretical lenses through which 'important actors' interact to shape the world (Bull & Watson, 1984). In a neo-realist sense, states formulate such an international system. Although this does not necessarily mean that all the other actors, such as international organisations, are completely ignored, NCR holds that given the crucial roles played by states regarding such organisations, states are considered prime actors in the international system (Buzan, Jones & Little, 1993). For this very reason, Ripsman *et al.* (2016) argue that an international system in NCR refers to the interstate system, which places states as a central actor. The nature of the system is anarchic and results in a self-help system, meaning there are ordering principles.

Structural Modifiers

Within this theoretical framework is an attempt to introduce two critical elements of the horizontal interaction of units (geography and military technology) and one concept (offence–defence balance) that help to illuminate how structural modifiers influence the basic interaction among states before intervening variables to come into play. As G. H. Snyder (1996, p. 170) conceptualises, military technology change 'affects all great powers, at least potentially'.

A quintessential example is nuclear weapons, which were alleged to reduce the risk of military confrontation during the Cold War (Van Evera, 1999). To put it into perspective, Van Ezra proposes the concept of an offence–defence balance. This concept maintains that the balance of defence and offence capability changes the intensity of security concerns, such as the security dilemma. The proliferation of nuclear weapons increases the damage in a war, and the incapability to protect against the usage of such weapons makes the first strike more advantageous (Van Evera, 1999). The second element of shaping horizontal interaction is geography. It provides a scope in which threats can be

more prominent due to the proximity and consideration of geographical particularities, such as sea-lanes or borders or the lack thereof (Boulding, 1962). Although elaborated later in this chapter, these play a crucial role in measuring the clarity of threat as an important transmission belt whereby structural incentives are translated into states' behaviour.

Power

The above discussion inevitably poses a question regarding what is power. NCR treats power differently from neo-realism. Even amongst the branches of realism, the debate over power is contentious (Schmidt, 2005). It is useful to introduce two approaches, advocated by Baldwin (2002), to define power. For neo-realism, power can be defined by 'the relational power approach', which considers material capabilities such as economic or military might or both as an actual aggregation of the power of states. It is true that NCR employs a varied set of measures to indicate states' power, such as GDP, defence spending, population, demography and natural resources (Schweller, 1998). However, NCR emphasises an additional element of power by applying Baldwin's other approach—national power—which views power as akin to 'influence' as a means to an end. That is, there should be a discrepancy between aggregated figures representing power and the actual limit of their utilisation. National power should differ from country to country so far as to what extent it can exert its resources. Conceptualising power in this way explains why Japan, despite its large economy, is not a 'military power': it has substantial limits on its capacity to utilise its resources (Boyd & Samuels, 2005). As will be developed later, this conception of power provides a logical channel through which intervening variables come into play in a realist analysis of the structure and behaviour of states.

By considering technology and geography as structural modifiers, we set an additional layer of unit interaction conceptualised with offence–defence balance. Furthermore, defining power in terms of NCR terms justifies the need to look at state-level variables, the aim of which Rose (1998, p. 161) succinctly specifies as 'bringing the states back in' (see Figure 3.2). Structural incentives are translated into what Ripsman *et al.* (2016) call 'systemic stimuli'.

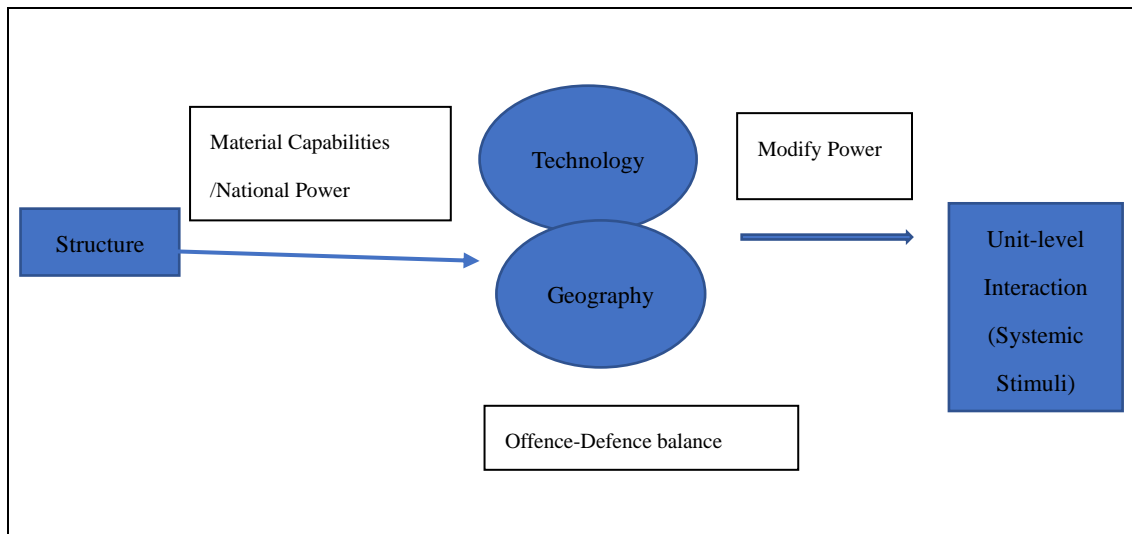


Figure 3.2 Conceptual Linkage Among Structure, System, Structural Modifiers and Power

3.3 The Concept of Strategic Environment and Clarity

NCR is criticised for its lack of predictive values that often stem from its purported inability to set hypotheses because of the ad hoc basis of applying intervening variables. This is particularly because Mearsheimer and Walt (2013, p. 432) argue, a well-developed theory is ‘falsifiable and offer[s] non-trivial explanations . . . [and] yields unambiguous predictions and specif[ies] their boundary conditions’. Thus, for NCR to have predictable values with falsifiable explanations, the concept of permissive/restrictive strategic environment and clarity—developed by Ripsman *et al.* (2016)— is determined by ‘clarity’. Depending on whether a given strategic environment at a given time is permissive or restrictive, along with the degree of clarity of threats, the direction of states behaviour can be predicted and hypothesised.

Assessment of a State’s Strategic Environment

A state’s strategic environment is mainly formulated by structure (i.e. anarchical nature with uncertainty and the relative distribution of material capabilities) as well as structural modifiers (i.e. military technology and geography for the state to identify threats and respond accordingly) (Ripsman *et al.*, 2016). Geography can provide us with an essential clue to assess the degree of threats (Snyder, 1996). On the other hand, military technology sometimes can transcend geographical proximity to conceive threats. A quintessential example is that, as Ripsman *et al.* (2016) argue, the emergence

of long-range ballistic missiles enabled the Soviet Union to appear as a significant threat to the US despite the long geographical distance. There are three overall criteria to assess a state's strategic environment as to whether it is restrictive or permissive with reference to 'clarity': '(1) revisionism or expressed hostility to harm the state's territorial integrity or core interests; (2) the economic and military capability to inflict harm on the state, which in turn depends on geography and technology; and (3) a sense of imminence (i.e., expectations that it will use its capability to inflict harm in short order)' (Ripsman *et al.*, 2016, p. 46). In theory, the restrictive strategic environment gives a state a clear signal as to the proper response, whereas NCR's hypothesis can be consistent or close to neo-realist prediction. On the other hand, in the permissive strategic environment, due to the lack of clear signals from the structure, options can vary depending on the state's composition and thereby increase explanatory power with the intervening variable.

In hypothesis building, it is important to note that as theory testing, NCR should determine the baseline to measure accuracy and logical consistency (Ripsman *et al.*, 2016). The thesis uses multiple realist branches—defensive and offensive realism—as a baseline. Leaving epistemological and ontological debates of each theory aside, it is useful to examine grand strategy adjustment to characterise a means for maximising a state's security. This suggests that a state's grand strategy can shift from behaviour based on defensive realism behaviour based on offensive realism. Relevant concepts such as grand strategy will be discussed in the following section.

Conceptualising 'Grand Strategy' and Its Adjustment as an Independent Variable

The term 'grand strategy' is ambiguous, and a definition has never been crystal clear (Gaddis, 2009). The reason for examining grand strategy in NCR is not only because the research question of this PhD fits but also because it provides an analytical space that bridges the gap between states and structure. This thesis considers the adjustment of 'grand strategy'—or what one calls 'grand strategic shift'—as an independent variable that is an outcome of states' behaviour. Furthermore, the author believes the intervening variables—unit-level components—arguably have greater explanatory power for the gaps between structure and a state's grand strategy as well as its adjustment.

This section considers definitions of grand strategy and its functionalities to provide a clear picture to examine them as an independent variable. As Martel (2015, p. 24)

argues, the origin and purpose of grand strategy are 'war-centric'. In this sense, grand strategy can relate to 'operational' and 'tactical' means, but this thesis considers 'grand strategy' at a broader level over a longer-term (Martel, 2015, p. 30). The broader characteristic of grand strategy in this thesis suggests it is global in scale, long term in temporal scope, highest political goals as a type of ends with all types of power (diplomatic, informational, military and economic).

Turning to definitions, according to Morgenthau (1973, p. 141), grand strategy is 'the art of bringing the different elements of national power to bear with maximum effect upon those points in the international situation which concern the national interest most directly'. This definition includes national power, which is defined in the previous section. Likewise, Gaddis (2009, p. 7) defines grand strategy as 'the calculated relationship of means to large ends. It is about how one uses whatever one has to get to wherever it is one wants to go'. Martel (2015, p. 31) adds that grand strategy is highly 'impermanent' because it changes according to the shifts in 'events, ideologies and interpretations'.

This is the critical difference from 'strategic culture', which is defined in more detail later. Strategic culture is predicated on the assumption that it is a pattern and rather static. J. L. Snyder (1977, p. 8) gives a broader definition of strategic culture as 'the sum total ideas, conditioned emotional responses and patterns of habitual behaviour that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation'.

The clear difference between grand strategy and strategic culture should be made. The former is a materialised strategy that has occurred, while the latter is essentially an idea that drives leaders to construct strategy. Thus, strategic culture can be materialised completely into the form of grand strategy, yet the functionality is guidance. With the malleable characteristic of grand strategy, whether the strategic environment is restrictive and permissive gives a broader predictive parameter within which a hypothesis of grand strategic adjustment can be made.

Having outlined the definition and characteristic of grand strategy, the question remains as to what 'grand strategic adjustment' means and how to measure such an adjustment. The proposed approach is the employment of several balancing behaviours provided by the branches of realist derivatives, not as a theory per se but as an overall means of

grand strategy. Its adjustment refers to the shift from one balancing behaviour to another (e.g. from defensive to offensive realist behaviour or from soft balancing to hedging).

Defensive realist behaviour refers to an attempt to maximise defensive capability to maintain the current position in the international community. Waltz (1979, p. 128) argues that ‘the first concern of states is not to maximise power but to maintain their position in the system’. Offensive realist behaviour suggests that states adopt aggressive and expansionist behaviour by maximising offensive military capabilities with the view to fixing the status quo (Mearsheimer, 2001). Goh (2005, p. 2) defines hedging as

a set of strategies aimed at avoiding (or planning for contingencies in) a situation in which states cannot decide upon more straightforward alternatives such as balancing, bandwagoning, or neutrality. Instead, they cultivate a middle position that forestalls or avoids having to choose one side at the obvious expense of another.

Last, according to Robert (2005, p. 36), ‘mechanisms of soft balancing include territorial denial, entangling diplomacy, economic strengthening, and signalling of resolve to participate in a balancing coalition’.

All of these steps can weaken the military power that the superior state can bring to bear in battle. In connection with the strategic environment, a broader direction of states can be made that the more restrictive the strategic environment is, the more likely states are to pursue direct balancing behaviour as the clarity and imminence of threats incentivising states to respond (Ripsman *et al*, 2016). On the other hand, in a permissive environment, states have options for soft balancing and hedging as well because of the unclarity of threats and the existence of several strategic options. Evidently, it should be empirically possible that states show contradicting behaviours against the above broader prediction. However, it should be determined on an ex post facto basis after testing NCR and the hypotheses.

3.4 Intervening Variables

A crucial aspect of NCR is its explanatory power by using intervening variables. However, few studies attempt to conceptualise each intervening variable responsible for the criticism of NCR as an ad hoc basis application. This section gives a concrete set of

definitions for intervening variables and a brief overview of their operationalisation. The selection of the intervening variables in this thesis is based on the work by Ripsman *et al.* (2016) to conceptualise intervening variables, which investigates most of NCR literature. The three intervening variables are applied to Japan through an empirical examination of Japan's security policy, which identifies leaders, institutions, the constitution, strategic culture and public/societal actors.

Leaders' Image

As a 'classical' element of NCR, leaders' image plays a crucial role in shaping states' behaviour with certain constraints given by structure. The value of this variable is based on the assumption that leaders are ultimately responsible for formulating a state's policy. The scope of this variable refers to foreign policy executives (FPEs) (Ripsman *et al.*, 2016). Depending on a state's political institutions, leaders include the president, prime minister, Cabinet members, bureaucrats, ministers and even political advisors close to influential leaders. The critical issue is how to define the leaders' image. There are numerous approaches, with some focusing on perception and information processing (R. Jervis, 1976) and others emphasising 'personal belief and character' (Mintz & DeRouen, 2010). In the thesis, leaders' image is defined by the dilemma between external and internal political rationales for them to make decisions.

First, it is assumed that leaders do not necessarily think in a neo-realist way, but they do have a clear image or ideal policy on how the state should behave (Rose, 1998). Concurrently, leaders are obligated to plan their move to not only maintain their political power but also mobilise the state 'national power'. Through this dilemma, leaders tend to prioritise the maintenance of political power over the mobilisation of national power.

To operationalise this dilemma and decisions made by leaders, the two concepts are introduced: strategic culture and political legitimacy. Strategic culture refers to 'the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behaviour that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation' (J. L. Snyder, 1977, p. 8). This is a useful concept for several reasons. First, it incorporates an empirically found set of patterns of states' behaviour that can be effectively employed to analyse leaders' image regarding an ideal response to the strategic environment. Second, as with countries holding several strategic cultures, it

reveals the distinctive difference among FPEs' ideas to capture a policy planning phase. Third, because the dynamics of the strategic culture of each FPE can be diverse, the criticism of a 'lack of analytical scope' for 'change of strategic culture' can be avoided.

The second key concept is political legitimacy, which is deeply related to domestic stability. In other words, it is about whether leaders have sufficient support from the public with relative authority over policy-making (He & Feng, 2013). As with 'prospect theory', with domestic political stability and legitimacy, leaders with public support often choose a risk-taking policy that is in line with leaders' strategic culture and yet not likely to be well-supported by the public. On the other hand, leaders without the support tend to take a risk-averse policy that is often in favour of the public—further contradictory to the realist prediction (He & Feng, 2013). It should also be entirely possible that in a restrictive strategic environment where a threat is imminent, leaders choose a risk-taking policy without much support from the public. This is why NCR holds that the conditions of the strategic environment are first and foremost an integral part of the analysis.

One may also ponder that leaders are not necessarily elected politicians; they can be influential bureaucrats or advisors to the authority. Bureaucrats are partial leaders who are civil servants and not elected politicians. In this sense, they are inclined to push for realising their strategic vision without so much the influence of public support.

State-society Relations

The second key intervening variable is state-society relations. Ripsman *et al.* (2016, p. 70-71) define these relations as 'the character of interactions between the central institutions of the state and various economic and or societal groups'. This often crystallises the element of the first variable—leaders' image—and, in particular, political legitimacy. In democratic countries, voting is often a legitimated channel through which the public influences leaders and constitutes risk-aversion policy selection. A failure to do so may result in the loss of leaders' position so that foreign policy may be likely to be changed by alternative leaders who comply with public demands (Cappella Zielinski, 2017). Albeit less likely, state-society relations also include a civil society group, the activism of which may influence decision-making. In contrast, influential activist groups, such as right-wing groups or techno-nationalist groups, exert influence in a way in which leaders lean towards risk-taking policy

selection (Solingen, 1994).

Another critical element of this variable is economic/parochial interests. These include security policy, which often comes along with economic interests and parochial interests such as defence technology and industry. As with the mobilisation model advocated by Zakaria (1998), implementing a security policy inevitably devours financial resources as well. Furthermore, Cappella Zielinski (2017) argues that states sometimes face the need to collect revenue. Economic interests, therefore, are crucial in shaping foreign policy, the voice of which is translated from key economic groups or industry/finance-related bureaucrats.

This leads to the next component, parochial interests. These are associated with vested interests and political corruptions. As NCR holds that leaders ultimately make decisions, personal relations between FPEs and actors that contain the exchange of vested interests may influence foreign policy. Therefore, the variable of state-society relations adds the details and coalition dynamics around which leaders reach a decision in a dilemma between their internal and external rationales.

Domestic Institutions

The third intervening variable is domestic institutions that help to delineate the entire framework within which leaders' action is confined and leaders and society interact. The policy-making process differs from state to state and is often defined by law or constitution. In this sense, this variable helps to delineate who the key actors are as FPEs. As assumed, the prime minister is chosen as a key FPE because the policy-making process designed by the law gives him/her authority to make decisions. Furthermore, the variable highlights the veto player who does not officially hold a power per se, and yet domestic institutions can create the situation in which a particular actor holds a critical role in making decisions (Tsebelis, 2002). In the case of political decision-making where the unanimity of Cabinet members is required, the person who is against the dominant view held by the others acts as a veto player (Levy, 1986). The variable considers constraints given not only by structure or institutions but also by the law or constitution—giving additional elements over which leaders construct policy. In essence, domestic institutions give us an overall rule or regulation in which leaders address the external/internal dilemma.

Based on the above discussion, the criticism of theoretical overdetermination can be

overcome because of the delineation of clear functionality of each intervening variables and their mutual interaction. Although the quasi-central focus is on leaders' image, its political legitimacy cannot be examined in detail without examining state-society relations, in particular, public support. Moreover, parochial interests can exert some influence as part of state-society relations based on the assumption that leaders are eventually responsible for policy-making. Furthermore, the struggle and competition over leaders' image cannot simply be examined without a close look at the policy-making process and its relevant institutions as the variable of domestic institutions (Tsebelis, 2002). This is because such institutions highlight power relations amongst leaders and illuminate potential veto players whose role is often crucial in policy-making. Thus, by employing variables from Foreign Policy Studies, NCR not only maintains its structural supremacy but also enriches our understanding of foreign policy-making with a detailed account (see Figure 3.3 for a visualisation of the relationship among intervening, independent and dependent variables).

These intervening variables indicate explanatory power when it comes to grand strategic adjustment. Functionalities of grand strategy particularly match the strength of the intervening variables. Martel (2015, p. 60) attempts to conceptualise the four functionalities. The first is 'priority' in both strategic culture and political legitimacy. This necessitates leaders to prioritise many external and internal demands, which has a close analytical linkage with leaders' image. The second is co-ordination of several means to achieve a state's goal (i.e. the way to organise and mobilise different resources), giving an avenue to examine state-society relations and domestic institutions. Related to the first functionality, the third is 'the balance of means and ends'. This is the calculation of risks of security policy to look at leaders' struggle to reach a consensus in the policy planning phase. The fourth is the integration of national power, giving us a comprehensive view of the interaction of each intervening variable. Given that grand strategy is impermanent, and such an adjustment is examined concerning several branches of realism, the intervening variables provide us with a clue as to what conditions a state shifts its grand strategy within the international system.

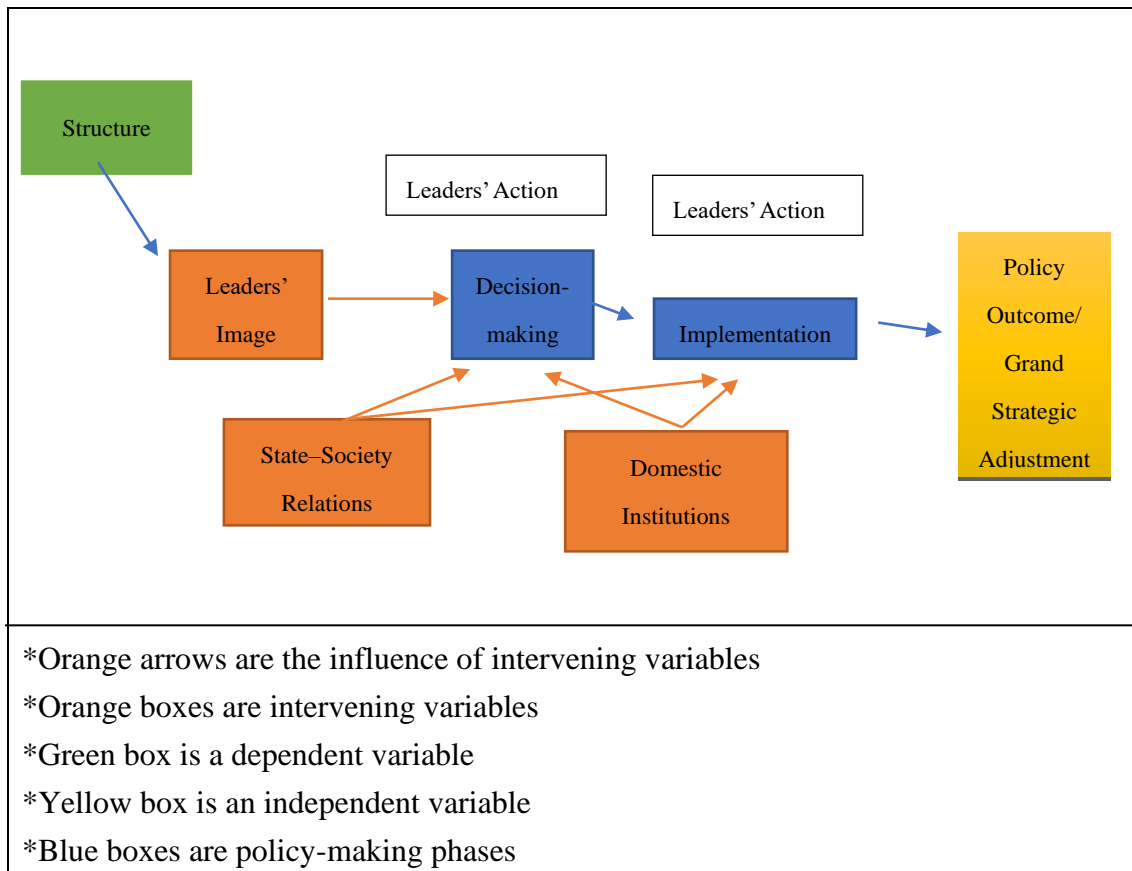


Figure 3.3 The Web of the Interaction of Each Variable

In summary, NCR is operationalised as follows. The structure is by far the most influential factor shaping states' behaviour. Uncertainty based on the lack of clarity often results in the state's actions deviating from the realist prediction. To overcome the weakness, this theoretical framework introduces the permissive/restrictive environment, depending on which states' action should be different and can be hypothesised.

In the restrictive strategic environment, a state should be likely to show behaviour close to realist predictions, whereas, in the permissive strategic environment, a state's behaviour largely depends on domestic-level variables. To test such a hypothesis, several means of strategic actions are employed based on the branches of realism: hedging, soft balancing, defensive realist behaviour and offensive realist behaviour. The grand strategic adjustment should be measured using the four strategically distinctive options.

To examine how a state reaches a particular foreign policy outcome amongst the four options within the constraints given by structure, NCR utilises the intervening variables.

Based on the assumption that leaders make ultimate decisions, leaders' image was examined regarding how leaders address the external/internal dilemma. Such a dilemma is characterised by strategic culture and political legitimacy (He & Feng, 2013). Given that war-centric strategy is not necessarily supported by the public, it is vital to maintaining political authority. This would cause leaders to make a compromise or railroad their strategic visions. This is the crucial element of the second variable of state-society relations. Furthermore, leaders may have to deal with economic groups with parochial interests so that leaders place particular weight on the voice of such groups, influencing security policy. The interaction of the two variables is crystallised by the third variable of domestic institutions, highlighting the power structure of leaders and institutional constraints making a particular strategy challenging to pursue.

The three intervening variables, therefore, constitute a symbiotic relation. In the end, NCR should be able to provide the answer as to what conditions a state shifts its grand strategy with predictive values towards a meaningful theory testing and accumulation of theoretically organised empirical knowledge.

3.5 Methodology – Process Tracing

This research intends to employ process tracing as its methodology for tracing causal mechanisms through an in-depth empirical examination of the way in which a causal process comes into play on an actual case. While process tracing can be used for both theory testing and theory building, this research is inclined to theory testing through the application of NCR. Causal mechanisms link causes and outcomes, which therefore serves as 'channels' or 'intervening variables' (Gerring, 2007; G. King, Keohane & Verba, 1994; Weller & Barnes, 2014). Thus, the influence of intervening variables defined above can be adequately analysed through the method of process tracing.

In process tracing, there are variants of its analytical usage—that is, 'minimalist' and 'systems' understandings of process tracing. The former has the propensity to identify causal mechanisms that are yet to be confirmed to link causes and outcomes. For instance, norms and ideas that purportedly link causes and outcomes are theoretically contentious as a causal mechanism (Elster, 1998). Thus, the minimalist approach aims to address whether and how norms and ideas connect causes and outcomes (George & Bennett, 2005). The latter seeks to 'unpack' the linkage of the causal mechanism between them, which results in the interlocking parts of the causal mechanism to show

how causal powers or forces between a cause(s) to an outcome are transmitted (Russo & Williamson, 2007).

In this research, process tracing is used through a minimalist strategy. In applying NCR to the case of Japan's security policy, 'intervening variables' as a causal mechanism have yet to be rigorously examined. Therefore, the research attempts to examine and confirm whether these variables play out to lead an outcome in selected cases. Notably, through the two case studies, this study aims to explore causal mechanisms between causes (systemic forces) and outcomes (grand strategy).

Thus, in theory testing, it is necessary to theorise a plausible causal mechanism by investigating existing literature with consideration of 'contextual conditions' (spatial, temporal and institutional conditions, particularly in Japan) (Falleti & Lynch, 2009). In NCR, leaders' image, strategic culture, domestic institutions and state-society relations are in the scope of contextual conditions. This leads to establishing a hypothesised causal mechanism(s) to test theory through process tracing to find 'mechanistic evidence'. To not produce just an analytical narrative, the minimalist strategy requires a thorough investigation of not only the existence of a causal mechanism(s) but also its probative values. Because this research aims to provide a comprehensive explanation of a particular outcome rather than generalisations or theory building, the discussion of selecting cases with comparative methods is not for consideration (Derek, 2017).

Turning to data selection and evidence collection, many archives and materials in English and Japanese were collected. These include official documents of the Cabinet, Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), as well as news archives. The selection of interviewees based on leaders defined in this chapter, who might have information regarding the process that the thesis traces. For this purpose, the author also conducted elite interviews when possible, such as with people who work for the two ministries, those who work for the defence industry and relevant journalists who specialise Japan's security policy with expertise on BMD or the Constitution. The elite interviews aimed to obtain data for a thorough process tracing when archives were insufficient. Interviews were conducted in Japanese on a semi-structure basis with fixed questions to obtain data to fill the gap in the process and confirm the already obtained data to link interviews and existing sources. A recording device was used to record each interview that was transcribed later. In total, 25 interviews were conducted mainly in Tokyo. All data of the interviews were digitised (e.g. scanned and stored) on a portable

device that had no communication capacity, such as a USB drive with complex encryption.

3.6 The Operationalisation of Neoclassical Realism in Japan's Security Policy

This section outlines how NCR and its relevant concepts are operationalised in the proposed two cases of Japan's security policy. In particular, how the two different areas of security policy—constitutional and military arena—are effectively examined with the same theoretical framework and variables discussed. It also provides a hypothesis so the NCR can be tested against other alternative explanations argued in the literature review.

Two Case Studies

The first case is the constitutional reinterpretation regarding Article 9. Its development process between 2004 and 2018 is considered the beginning of the Cabinet initiation reinterpretation/revision of Article 9 to allow CSD. CSD imposes a constitutional limit on Japan's capacity to balance (Samuels, 2007). The allowance of CSD by reinterpreting Article 9 may enable Japan to enhance its defensive realist strategy while the revision of Article 9 (i.e. pacifist clauses) would lead to an offensive realist strategy. Under the hypothesis of the paper, changing the degree of aggravating restrictive strategic environment provides a strong incentive to upgrade Japan's security policy to balance through the defensive realist or even offensive realist-oriented strategy. However, the unique domestic political situation where firm aversion against a change in the constitution might hinder the degree of Japan's grand strategic shift.

The second case considers the development of the BMD, in particular between 2004 and 2018 when the government issued a Cabinet decision to deploy BMD and the impacts of CSD (expanding the legal capacity of BMD) began to be seen (Hughes, 2013). An overall hypothesis of how structure resulted in Japan's BMD development is that structure does not merely dictate the acquisition and development of BMD. Instead, structural impacts (North Korea) and external force (the US) create an opportunity and incentive for those with vested interests, which resulted in the convergence of the means (the development of BMD) with different purposes. Actors in the defence industry and some bureaucrats saw it as an opportunity to revitalise the domestic defence industry with potential profits, while some policymakers considered it a critical alternative to sustain/strengthen the US security alliance. Alternatively, leaders with strong visions in

Japan's relative position in international security use the threat of North Korea to further the process of 'normalisation'—and BMD is a means to achieve it. Combination and examination of the two cases effectively highlight their grand strategic adjustment, which is often overlooked in the overarching theme of 'remilitarization'.

Independent variable: Strategic environment

As discussed, the strategic environment is assessed through the three critical components of clarity: (1) revisionism or expressed hostility to harm the state's territorial integrity or core interests; (2) the economic and military capability to inflict harm on the state, which in turn depends on geography and technology; and (3) a sense of imminence (i.e. expectations that it will use its capability to inflict harm in short order) (Ripsman *et al.*, 2016). The strategic environment surrounding Japan is assessed through its relations with China and North Korea because both meet the first condition regarding revisionism and hostility. It is also important to note that the US plays a crucial part in Japan's strategic environment. This is not only because Japan relies on the US for its security but also because the attitudes of the US towards countries inevitably influence the way Japan formulates its grand strategy.

Dependent variable of grand strategic adjustment: Deconstructing Japan's security options based on four realist behaviours

Scrutinising two cases to examine grand strategic adjustment inevitably poses a question of how these cases formulate a grand strategy. This section discusses how their combination represents Japan's grand strategy. It also aims to identify the degree of militarisation concerning four balancing behaviours.

First, the implication of each case should be examined. In the case of Article 9, it starts with the fact that Japan could not exercise CSD. Therefore, Japan cannot take up a role in both regional and international security in resolving conflicts through any military means. The allowance of it expands Japan's role and capacity as well as enhances interoperability of the US alliance to share more 'burden' through defensive means (Hughes, 2013). On the other hand, the revision of Article 9, although depending on the details of the revision, may eliminate the constraints of non-possession of offensive capabilities and hence lead to a revisionist state with an offensive realist strategy.

The case of BMD is somewhat more defensive in nature. Its fundamental purpose is to deal with the attacks that involve ballistic missiles. Although its attacking ability against incoming missiles can be offensive, such capability is incorporated in the existing defence system so that the deployment and development of BMD are considered as an enhancement of defence capability. As with offence–defence balance, moving towards BMD development is a means to achieve security by maximising defence capability (i.e. defensive realist behaviour). Despite its defensive nature, there is one exceptional factor. That is ‘counter-strike capability’ or the ability to destroy the threat’s offensive capability as a first strike, which could be allowed through the revision of Article 9 (Ota, 2009). Attacking for the sake of defence leads to the acquisition of offensive capability, shifting the strategy from defensive to offensive realist behaviour. What follows are four different grand strategies for Japan and how these would shift as foundational outcomes for hypothesis building.

Soft balancing suggests that diplomatic focus with non-military tools constitutes a grand strategy (Arase & Akaha, 2010). In the case of Japan, such strategy can be approached by diplomatic dialogue with North Korea and economic interdependence with China as well as its engagement in regional institutions such as ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and six-party talks. This implies there should be no development in both cases.

Hedging suggests a situation in which a state cannot determine which balancing behaviour should be adopted while the state should flexibly prepare itself, leaving several options (Goh, 2005). In the case of CSD, the discussion of potential development and preparation for future deployment is underway. The same goes for BMD. Although the change can be expected, the essence of grand strategy prefers a status quo. Defensive realism contends that a state attempts to maximise its security capacity that takes place in the form of BMD development/deployment. This is because, as its name dictates, BMD is by definition a defence system that should be capable of dealing with incoming missiles from threats. Dedication towards it means the enhancement of defence capability, though, as discussed, not to the extent to which Japan acquires a counter-strike capability. On the other hand, offensive realism dictates that a state is by definition, an expansionist (Mearsheimer 2001), which results in a permanent nature of conflicts in structure. As discussed, CSD constitutes an element of offensive realist behaviour that comes along with the possession of a counter-strike capability in BMD.

In measuring Japan's strategic adjustment, the absence and presence of several types of behaviour in each case are under consideration (see Table 3.1). If there is no ongoing development or consideration of development, then Japan's grand strategy is soft balancing. If Japan chooses to consider one or both of the cases and yet has not made a concrete decision to deploy BMD and reinterpret the constitution, then its grand strategy shifts to hedging. In case Japan decides to deploy BMD and its development with the absence of progress in CSD issue, the grand strategy shifts to defensive realist-oriented strategy. As the ultimate case where Japan pursues the CSD and counter capability of BMD, the shift in its grand strategy can be seen from defensive to offensive realist strategy.

Table 3.1 Japan's Grand Strategic Adjustment and Its Means

Article 9	The development of BMD	Type of behaviour
×	×	Soft balancing
△	△	Hedging
○ (CSD)	○ (Deployment)	Defensive realism
◎ (Revision)	◎ (Offensive capabilities)	Offensive realism
*◎ = further development, ○ = development, △ = consideration of development, × = absence of development		

An overall assessment of the strategic environment surrounding Japan since the end of the Cold War should conclude that it has become increasingly more restrictive with increased clarity. The Japanese grand strategy shifted accordingly. The period between approximately 1998 and 2006 saw North Korea launch missiles, during which the strategic environment shifted from permissive to restrictive. It has been worsened by the gradually apparent hostility of China towards Japan and its economic and military rise, overtaking Japan's military spending.

The overall hypothesis so far is that in the relatively permissive environment, Japan would pursue soft balancing, while the gradual shift in the environment leads Japan to hedge. In the restrictive environment, Japan would shift its strategy from hedging to defensive realist strategy. Last, the more aggravated the strategic environment, the more likely Japan is inclined to shift from defensive to offensive realist grand strategy,

characterising and hypothesising its progressive yet gradual grand strategic adjustment.

Intervening Variables

Most of the literature on Japan's security policy widely covers the influence of leaders and other actors, institutions and the public. This section serves to rearrange the existing literature to provide empirically detailed and predefined intervening variables.

Leaders' image

As discussed, leaders' image composes of two elements—strategic culture and political legitimacy—although the latter does not necessarily apply to bureaucrats who are argued to have a strong influence on policy-making in Japan (Johnson, 1995). Therefore, political legitimacy has a particular characteristic that comes into play when examining leaders who are politicians. While political legitimacy is a concept that can be applied more or less evenly to any democratic countries that emphasise the election, strategic culture is distinctive to a particular state. Japan is no exception.

There are four strategic cultures—normalisation, US ally, middle-power internationalism and pacifism—whose ideological competition helps shape Japan's grand strategy (Samuels, 2007). Normalisation strategic culture refers to the idea of abolishing existing constraints that make Japan 'abnormal', such as the pacifist constitution and the upgrade of the SDF. Strategic culture is also associated with the fundamental aim to distance the country from the US to pursue a more autonomous security policy. On the other hand, the strategic culture of a US ally, despite its similarities of normalisation to view the current constitution as barriers, suggests the necessity to achieve security within the development of the US-Japan security alliance. Internationalist strategic culture emerged after the end of the Cold War, which Soeya (2005) characterises as middle-power internationalisation, and emphasised international co-operation based on UN centralism through disaster relief, peaceful conflict resolution, ODA and FDI. Pacifism has a clear connection with 'anti-militarism' and emphasises unarmed neutrality and hence the preservation of the current pacifist constitution.

Although those strategic cultures do not necessarily translate into one of the grand strategies mentioned before, strategic culture is a set of beliefs that influences decision-making. As Oros (2014) argues, individual leaders hold strategic ideas that can fall under one of the strategic cultures that compete to actualise into policy outcome.

NCR holds that the interaction of such strategic cultures depending on political contexts at a given time produces outcomes that do not have a clear connection with a particular strategic culture. The grand strategic adjustment occurs through ‘adjustment’, not suggesting a fundamental departure from the previous time. Therefore, it is assumed that leaders, based on the ideological competition, can adjust with reference to a dominant strategic culture among them at a given time.

Examining leaders’ image requires the identification of leaders in security policy-making. Although empirical studies help delineate important leaders, regulations and laws that specify the role of actors in security policy-making are examined under the key intervening variable of domestic institutions. First, the prime minister is arguably the most critical actor in Japan (Shinoda, 2000; Uchiyama, 2013). As the Cabinet Law (1952) stipulates, the prime minister is the head of the Cabinet and is responsible for decision-making. The law confirms that individual ministers are in charge of their respective areas.

As many argue, bureaucrats are almost inseparable when it comes to security policy-making in Japan. The ministers of defence and foreign affairs are included in ‘leaders’. The inclusion of the MOFA is based in history. Before the MOD was upgraded from the DA, security policy was often co-ordinated through the MOFA (Fukuyama, 2013). The Act for Establishment of Ministry of Foreign Affairs stipulates that the MOFA is responsible for tasks concerning foreign policy, including national security. For instance, the MOFA has the Japan–U.S. Security Treaty Division in which, as Fukuyama (2013) observes, the most capable bureaucrats of the MOFA are allocated. This division is responsible for close co-ordination with the US for economics and security.

The Act for Establishment of Ministry of Defence (1954) specifies the role of the MOD is the same as the MOFA: to construct security policy. In particular, according to National Government Organization Act (1948), each ministry has one administrative vice minister, whose role is crucial in connecting the minister and the ministry for policy-making and co-ordination. The prime minister tends to have personal and special advisors (Makihara, 2015), the latter of which hold an official position in the Cabinet as a special advisor to the prime minister. Personal advisors are unofficial, although finding a link of personal connection with the prime minister would help further illuminate leaders’ image. In sum, leaders include the prime minister, relevant Cabinet

members, administrative vice ministers from MOFA and MOD, and personal and official advisors to the prime minister.

State-society relations: The public and economic/societal groups

As discussed, state-society relations refer to the relationship among the government, key economic groups and the public. The latter two are necessary resources to mobilise. In particular, the Japanese public is known for a strong aversion to security policy development that is embedded in the form of anti-militarism (Berger, 1996; Katzenstein, 2008; Midford, 2006; Oros, 2008). Therefore, it is critical to note that leaders make cautious decisions on how to respond to the structure by prioritising political legitimacy and external threats. Japan has always enhanced international security co-operation thorough constitutional reinterpretation by stretching the implications of the original pacifist constitution. Such a reinterpretation is essentially dealt with in the Diet as policy-making because bills to propose a change in security policy have to be made into law, which requires, in general, more than half of the seats in both the Upper and Lower Houses (Neary, 2002). Therefore, political stability is essential to pursue security policy change and more broadly grand strategic adjustment.

Another important aspect of the public in Japanese politics is its fluctuating support for the prime minister that resulted in six short reigns between 2006 and 2012. According to Carlson (2017), one reason is policy failure scandals, such as the lost pension records that weakened the LDP and the DPJ's alleged inability to handle the 3.11 earthquake and subsequent nuclear meltdown. Regime change and change in prime minister within the same party often come with a shift in policy change, creating the image of de facto regime change (Kitaoka, 2008). A quintessential example is when Fukuda Yasuo took over the premiership from Abe within the LDP in 2007. Fukuda did not pursue Abe's initiative for the constitutional revision. This signifies political legitimacy that Japanese leaders have to take into account.

The second element of the variables concerns societal/economic groups with vested interests. Security policy implementation involves the development of the existing military capability that is handled by the defence industry, such as the Mitsubishi Heavy Industry and Kawasaki Heavy Industry. This has more to do with the case of BMD. Because political corruption, such as bribes, between the MOD bureaucrats and business elites is well-documented (Hughes, 2009), it is likely the defence industry may

reflect its interests in defence policy drafted by the MOD. The second societal/economic group is Keidanren (Japan Business Federation), which is arguably the biggest business organisation to promote social and firms' interests in economic policy-making, including policies concerning the defence industry. As a lobbying body, Keidanren plays a crucial role in negotiating with the government and co-ordinating respective interests (Yoshimatsu, 2005). There are several think tanks or quasi-governmental institutions that may have relevance to security policy-making in Japan. They are included because influential former politicians—often former defence ministers—and the so-called *kokubō-zoku* (politicians with defence expertise) are involved with lobbying power.

Nippon Kaigi, arguably the largest right-wing group, is portrayed as the 'most powerful lobbying group' (Economist, 2015) and a 'nationalist think tank' (Economist, 2013). Abe is a member of this group along with other politicians who advocate constitutional revision with the stipulation of the military (Shiomi, 2016). The group may have enhanced the stance to advocate the constitutional revision that Abe already held as prime minister.

The Japan Foundation Centre for Global Partnership, a semi-governmental institution founded by the MOFA, provides a channel where the US and Japanese politicians interact through an event called 'Japan-American Cultural Society, the Exchange of Japan-US Lawmakers on National Security Issues'. Hisao Kyuma (former chief of LDP security policy research council), Tsutomu Kawara (former minister of defence) and even elites from the defence industry have been invited. Such interaction may influence the defence policy co-ordination with the US (M. Noda & Tanaka, 2009).

The same goes for the Japan Forum for Strategic Studies, which consists of a number of security- and defence-related politicians and business elites. The involvement of active or retired influential politicians can serve as a channel to maximise its lobbying power on security policy-making. Although these groups' relative importance over the other intervening variables could be less significant, it is useful to trace the leaders' personal connection through which decisive information can be transmitted from these groups and reflect on policy outcome. Scrutinising these groups also gives us a clue to examine the influence of *kokubō-zoku*.

State-society relations primarily concern the cohesion of the government, parties and societies. Opposition parties are considered part of variables, while often the opposition

parties are not substantial in the case of Japanese politics. However, one of the periods for examining the two case studies deals with the regime change that shows the greater influence of opposition parties. Regarding the variable of domestic institutions, the institutional strengths of opposition parties can be measured simply by the votes and seats in the diet. Opposition parties could play a role in enlarging public dissatisfaction by attacking the ruling party or strongly opposing a particular security policy initiative. Thus, opposition parties, as part of the intervening variable, primarily entail to what extent they exert influence on security policy-making beyond their institutional capacity given by the seats they have.

Domestic institutions

Domestic institutions are arguably the most complex variable in the Japanese political setting. Besides the general institutional settings of policy-making, domestic institutions often serve as internal barriers when Japan shifts its grand strategy to take more active roles in the international system. These barriers are what Katzenstein (1996) calls an ‘institutionalised form of anti-militarism’ and all stem from the pacifist constitution. For instance, when it comes to constitutional reinterpretation to allow the right of self-defence, the Cabinet Legislative Bureau (CLB) exerts a significant influence over policy-making. The process for enacting laws must undergo the examination work of the CLB, which is famously known as *hō no bannin* (‘the guardian of law’) (Sakata & Kawaguchi, 2014). Its role maintains constitutional consistency, and hence its identity is institutionalised as ‘anti-militarism’ to maintain the pacifist constitution.

Moreover, enacting laws requires a simple majority in the Upper and Lower Houses. For instance, in 2012, the LDP only held a majority in the Lower House, suggesting the potential abandonment of policy initiatives by the rejection of the Upper House (Shinoda, 2013). One exception is to have the superiority of the Lower House over the Upper House. When the policy plan that has been approved by the Lower House is rejected in the Upper House, but when a re-vote in the Lower House exceeds two-thirds of the politicians in attendance favour of the policy plan, the law is passed (Neary, 2002). Furthermore, Diet Law dictates a period within which the Diet must reach a decision (150 days with the right to extend once for 150 days) . If no decision is reached, then the policy plan is discarded (House of Representatives, 2014).

Another key element of the variable is elections. Elections often put the current leaders

at the juncture as to whether they will be able to keep their policy initiatives towards the implementation. General elections have larger implications on security policy for several reasons. First, the change in the leader of the ruling party would substantially impact the course of security policy development (Kitaoka, 2008). Second, particular to Japan, the Cabinet often exercises the right to dissolve the diet—the snap election—to maintain political stability whereby leaders prioritise ‘political legitimacy’ as part of the leaders’ dilemma (Catalinac, 2016). Last, even though the ruling party wins the general election despite some loss of seats, the ruling party swaps the prime minister because it is often considered a sign of the prime minister’s declining popularity and leadership (twice in 2009 and 2012 for the Lower House election and once in 2007 for the Upper House election). When leaders prioritise political stability, they do not spare resources to implement security policy initiatives. As the election campaign starts several months before an election, it may cause a delay when security policy initiatives are controversial. Thus, elections can be both a great indicator of the speed of security policy development and an institutional barrier when a controversial security policy is on the table.

Although the above policy-making process in the domestic institution does not necessarily apply to the case of BMD, the constitution does impose significant constraints on BMD development. The self-imposed constraints—another institutionalised form of anti-militarism—that stem from the pacifist constitution, such as the ban on arms export, non-military use of space and CSD, are hindrances to the BMD development (Hughes, 2013). Such highly technological military equipment with huge potential costs is not an easy option to pursue if technological transfer and international collaboration are not allowed. In particular, the domestic defence industry cannot pursue international markets because the ban on arms export limits the development of space exploration, which often takes place through international collaboration (Morimoto, 2002). The legal framework in the 1990s and early 2000s did not permit such space usage. In the case of Japan, BMD is initially a US initiative, so the US is not only of critical importance but also a prerequisite partner to deploy the system. This means CSD also limits the interoperability between the US and Japan and hence the overall defence capability of Japan.

The general development of BMD occurs through the co-ordination of the SDF and the MOD. However, the decision-making to deploy BMD requires the Cabinet’s decision, which involves the policy-making explained above. Although less significant, the

development of BMD requires a budget that must go through the policy-making process of the Budget Committee in the Diet. In sum, domestic institutions highlight potential barriers for pursuing the strategy of BMD. A breakdown of each intervening variable is provided in Table 3.2

Table 3.2 Breakdown of Each Intervening Variable

Intervening variable	Breakdown of each intervening variable	Examples
Leaders' image	Elected leaders – politicians (with leaders' dilemma)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - US ally (MOFA, DA/MOD, some prime ministers, some LDP and DPJ politicians) - Normalisation (some prime ministers, LDP/DPJ politicians) - UN centrism - Pacifism (the Komeito [LDP's coalition partner])
	Non-elected leaders – bureaucrats (without leaders' dilemma)	
Domestic institutions	Policy-making framework	Laws and regulations such as who possesses the power to implement policies and a two-thirds majority to enact security-related laws
	Institutionally embedded anti-militarism	Article 9 and its derivative, such as the ban on arms export and CSD (represented by the CLB)
	Elections	Potential to reshuffle leaders, such as the prime minister and leaders focused on prioritising political stability over strategic views
State-society relations	The public	The Cabinet support rate (over a security policy), which is known as the socially accepted norm of anti-militarism
	Economic/societal groups	Keidanren, the defence industry, Nippon Kaigi, etc.
	Opposition parties	DPJ and LDP

3.7 Hypotheses of Japan's Incremental Grand Strategic Adjustment

The final section of this chapter provides hypotheses by linking all the variables. First, as outlined, the assessment of the strategic environment surrounding Japan underscores the basic line to determine whether Japan shifts to a more realist-oriented grand strategy (either defensive or offensive) from hedging or soft balancing. Moreover, depending on the degree of the permissive or restrictive strategic environment, the strategy can shift within from soft balancing to hedging and from defensive to offensive realist type of behaviour. An actual outcome is left to the interaction of the intervening variables. Table 3.3 and Figure 3.4 recaptures the operationalisation of NCR with hypotheses and an analytical model to analyse Japan's grand strategic adjustment.

Table 3.3 List of Hypotheses Relating to Japan's Progressive Grand Strategic Adjustment

Hypothesis number	Grand strategic shift	Hypothesis
H1	Soft balancing	A non-military tool to conduct Japan's security policy. Neither CSD nor BMD is pursued because of the permissive nature of the given strategic environment.
H2	Hedging	Both CSD and BMD are under consideration but not actively pursued in the relatively permissive strategic environment.
H3	Defensive realist	In the restrictive environment, defensive capabilities are enhanced through BMD, and the constitutional revision may or may not be pursued depending on the need for external balancing.
H4	Offensive realist	In the more restrictive strategic environment, Japan actively pursues the full-degree of CSD or the constitutional revision and offensive capability of BMD.

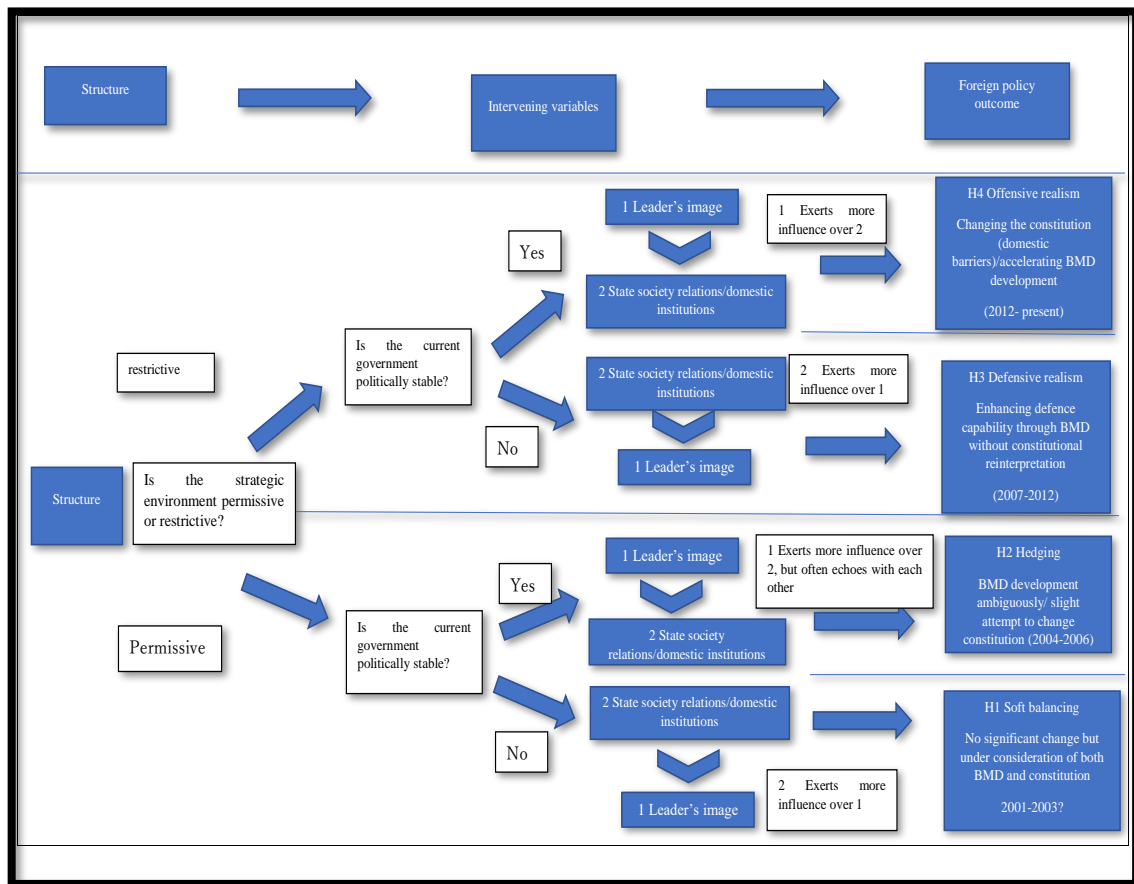


Figure 3.4 NCR Analytical Model of Japan's Security Policy

Under soft balancing, that Japan neither pursues the development of BMD nor attempts constitutional revision/reinterpretation. Instead, it pursues security through non-military means, such as diplomacy and economic interdependence. Hedging includes some initial attempts or considerations of both constitutional revision and BMD. Defensive realist strategy suggests that Japan could deploy BMD for defensive purposes with the allowance of CSD, not including any counter-strike capability or any sorts while not aggressively pursuing the constitutional revision for a more active role in the international security. Last, with offensive realist strategy, Japan more actively seeks a way to achieve constitutional revision to attain a full degree of CSD with the pursuit of offensive military capability, such as counter-strike capability.

The shift within the permissive and restrictive strategic environments depends on the interplay of the three intervening variables. The two concepts help hypothesize the intervening variables. In the case of CSD, political legitimacy plays a crucial role. As discussed, the socially accepted norm of anti-militarism has empirically shown the

aversion to CSD. Therefore, the restrictive environment and political stability are a quintessential condition to pursue CSD or revision of Article 9.

On the other hand, with the bureaucratic politics model, information asymmetry can occur in the case of BMD because of its nature of high technicality that results in the bargaining of leaders in favour of bureaucrats (Sebata, 2010). Thus, in the case of BMD, the development is hypothesised to be ongoing regardless of political stability because the public is less influential without a specific channel to influence, such as elections. However, this should be unlikely in the restrictive environment, where there are not many options for a defensive realist strategy. In this sense, the thesis views the implications of the anti-militarism differently from most constructivists who argue for a more or less equal impact on overarching Japan's security policy. While anti-militarism is institutionally embedded continues to exercise its power (Katzenstein, 1996), the thesis considers that in the case of BMD the socially accepted norm of anti-militarism is relatively absent. Therefore, the hypotheses of this thesis include the view there is a different degree of impact of anti-militarism in each case.

From the following chapter, Japan's security policy development is examined through the application of NCR, which starts with the assessment of the strategic environment since the post-cold war era. This is to examine the changing degree of restrictiveness/permisiveness of the strategic environment which determines the overall course of Japan's security policy. After the assessment, the actual outcome is scrutinised with the intervening variables in the case of Article 9 and BMD.

4 Assessment of the Strategic Environment: Japan's Behaviour Post-Cold War and In Future

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the theoretical framework and its operationalisation in the case of Japan. Nevertheless, as long as the structure in a realist sense matters as a critical variable to test NCR, it is crucial to suggest how the structure theoretically could have impacted Japan's security policy in the post-Cold War era. This chapter, therefore, serves as the theoretical assessment of Japan's strategic environment with the theoretical predictions by a branch of realism(s).

Both offensive and defensive realism are applied to put forward possible paths Japan could take. China and North Korea are chosen to constitute Japan's main strategic concerns towards which Japan theoretically could show balancing behaviour. Many argue that since the 1990s Japan has begun to face two critical yet different types of threats from North Korea, with its hostile, albeit small, economic and military size, and from China, with ambiguity despite its substantial material rise in the region. As explained in the previous chapter, the assessment primarily pertains to the three conditions according to NCR:

(1) revisionism or expressed hostility to harm the state's territorial integrity or core interests; (2) the economic and military capability to inflict harm on the state, which in turn depends on geography and technology; and (3) a sense of imminence (i.e., expectations that it will use its capability to inflict harm in short order). (Ripsman *et al.*, 2016, p. 46)

'Revisionism' in this research refers to a state that influences a change in the status quo (i.e. regional balance of power through the change in military and economic capabilities and stance to challenge the status quo) (Mearsheimer, 2001).

Furthermore, this chapter presupposes the strategic environment with the US-Japan alliance because of its significance in the region. It has been more than 65 years since Japan formed an alliance with the US. During this time, the US has shown predominance in IR as a superpower. In particular, the US-Japan alliance has taken a form of 'the division of labour': while Japan provides the 'shield' for defence, the US

supplies the ‘spear’ for an offence under its nuclear umbrella (Samuels & Heginbotham, 2018), which Pyle (2018) describes as an ‘unnatural intimacy’. Thus, in the context of East Asian security with US commitment to the region, a threat made towards the US is predicated on the assumption that it also is indirectly made towards Japan.

4.2 The Rise of China

Breakdown of China’s Rise: Economy and Military Capabilities

Although it is hard to pinpoint when China began its rise, by the early 2000s, China had shown signs of surpassing Japan’s economic might and military capabilities from a simple observation of GDP growth and size (World Bank, 2018a) (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2). As outlined above, the size of the economy does matter as one of the most fundamental elements to constitute a threat in a structural realist sense. While the size of the Japanese economy in 2004, for instance, was twice that of China, the annual growth of the Chinese economy—which experienced a 10-digit growth rate—was five times higher than Japan’s annual GDP growth (World Bank, 2018a). In fact, due to the 10–15% annual rise in China’s defence expenditure, together with Japan’s almost unchanged level of the defence budget, China has spent more on defence than Japan since 2005. With these figures, Japan started to recognise China as a potential threat in 2000 in its annually published defence white paper (Asahi Shimbun, 2000b).

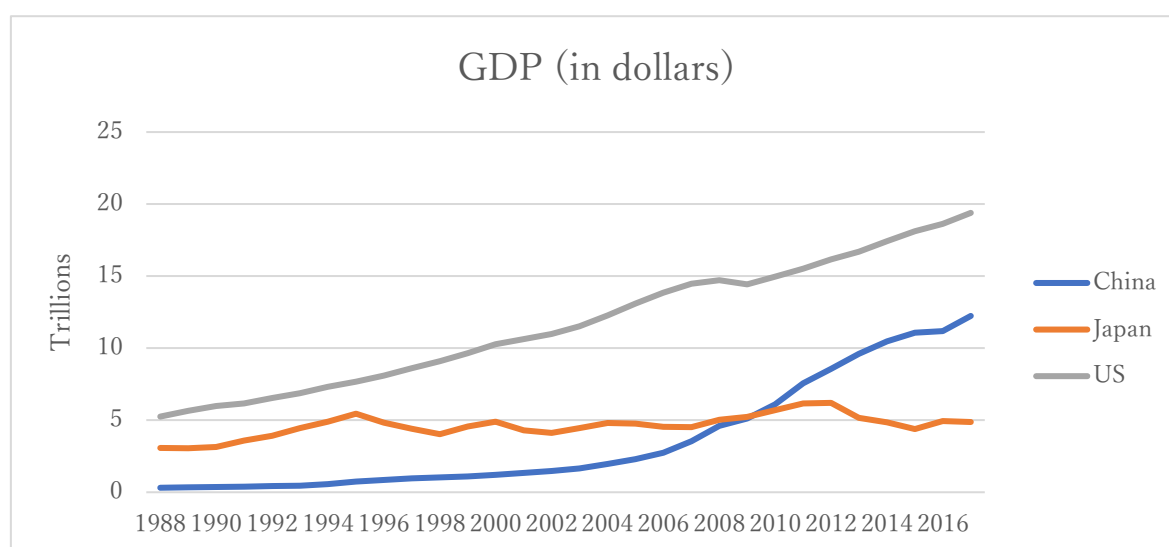


Figure 4.1 GDP of the US, China and Japan (retrieved from World Bank (2018a))

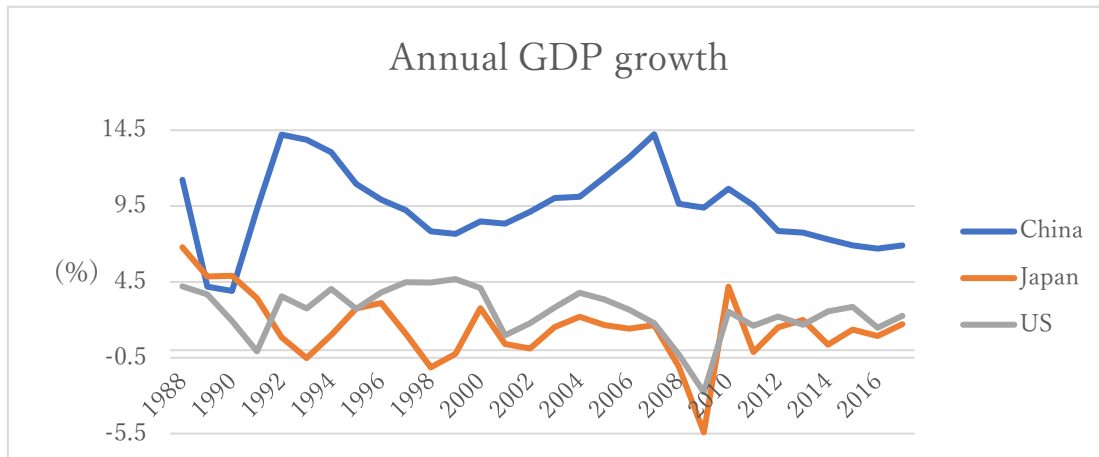


Figure 4.2 Annual GDP Growth of US, China and Japan (retrieved from World Bank (2018a))

China overtook Japan's economy in 2011. By then, as Figure 4.3 shows, Chinese military expenditure was more than twice that of Japan. As of 2018, China has a defence budget that is five times larger than Japan's and an economy twice the size (World Bank, 2018a). Figure 4.4 shows us a striking feature of the formidable size of the Chinese economy. Calculating a state's economic power using purchasing power parity (PPP), China's PPP has already surpassed even the US since 2014. As of 2017, China's PPP is 20% more than the US.

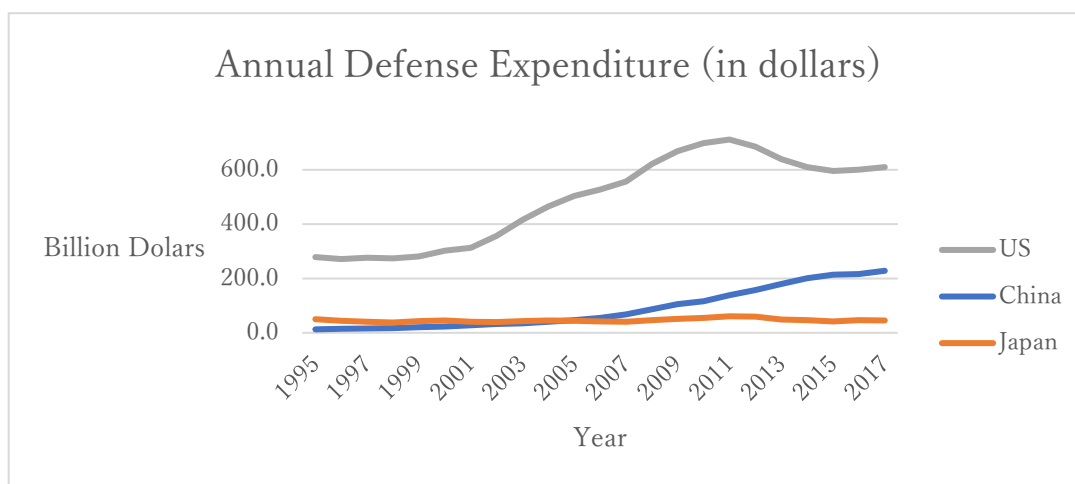


Figure 4.3 Annual Military Expenditure of US, China and Japan (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute)

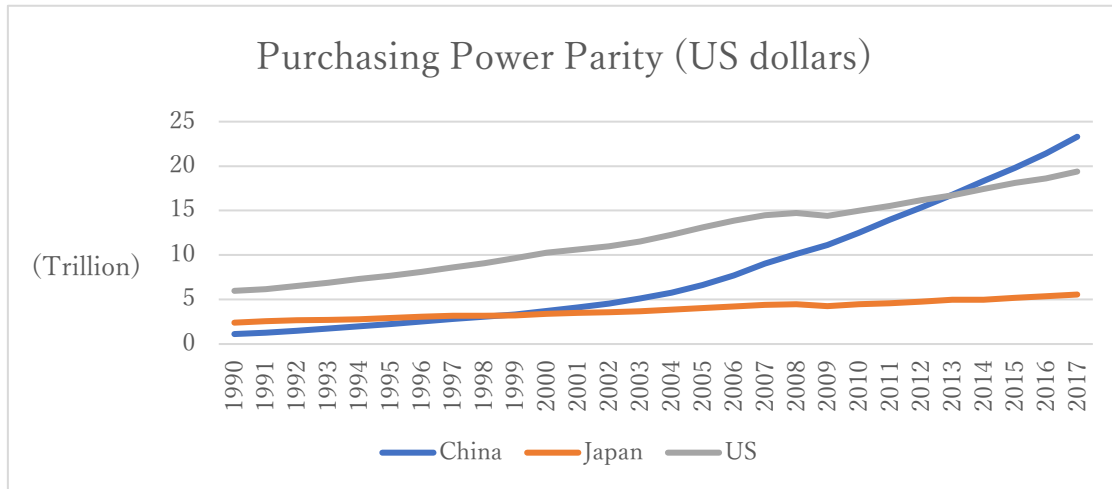


Figure 4.4 Purchasing Power Parity of US, China and Japan (retrieved from World Bank (2018a))

Regarding China's actual military capability, in the 1990s Japan and the US were concerned by China's potential to launch a nuclear missile, making it the fifth country to officially possess nuclear weapons. The US NSC (2000) report indicates that China already possesses 40–50 intermediate and medium-range ballistic missiles with one nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine. However, according to the report from the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), in the 1990s and early 2000s, most of the increasing defence expenditure in China was spent on modernising the military with a reorganisation of ground, navy and air forces. Hence military capabilities were considered limited in comparison to other nuclear powers as it was scheduled for completion by 2001 (IISS, 2000). That said, as of 1996, China already developed offensive capabilities of ICBM, and medium and short-range ballistic missiles – Japan is in its range. This suggests China had already a capacity to inflict harm to Japan. By 2006, China reported that a domestically produced nuclear attack submarine was underway for imminent operation (IISS, 2006).

However, the landscape has gradually changed as the Chinese military proceeded its modernisation and development in the 2000s (Fisher, 2008). China succeeded in its space mission in 2003 through the launch of Shenzhou-V as a military satellite with more efforts to be made for 'self-sufficiency' by harnessing the military-industrial complex, together with increased R&D (IISS, 2004). This echoes with increasing uncertainty and a lack of transparency on the breakdown of the Chinese military budget. Only information on the prevailing personnel, operations and equipment are available;

notably absent are details on military-related expenditures such as the procurement of weapons from abroad, state subsidies to the defence industry and R&D programmes (IISS, 2006).

In 2010, the U.S. Department of Defense put forward estimates of the degree of modernisation of Chinese military (modern warfare capability), such as firing anti-ship cruise missiles and developed combat aircraft (IISS, 2010). This went in tandem with the acquisition and deployment of aircraft carriers and newly developed combat aircraft. What is notable is the resources shifting into the navy and air forces in China with more aggressive and obvious behaviour to expand regional influence over the East and South China Sea, which includes a territorial dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands with Japan (IISS, 2012). This results in the increased number of vessels, submarines and aircraft carriers with combat aircraft. Subsequently, China reorganised its military structure for more direct preparation for ‘conflicts’ or ‘confrontation’ due to the structural transition from seven ‘military regions’ to five ‘theatre commands’ (IISS, 2017). While the Northern Theatre Command is primarily for the Korean Peninsula with the potential inclusion of Japan, the Eastern Theatre Command is for Taiwan and possibly Japan. China’s expansion and enhancement of its military capability reached the point where China officially built its first foreign military facility in Djibouti in 2017, increasing its destabilising impact in the region and more obvious revisionist stance, which seems to be a critical threat to Japan (New York Times, 2017).

From the above argument, concerning the criterion of ‘threats’—the economic and military capability to inflict harm on the state, which depends on geography and technology—it seems China already possessed military capability per se to inflict harm to Japan since the 1990s (Fisher, 2008). However, its military budget rose to take over Japan in 2005 and the economy surpassed that of Japan since 2011. Together with modernised Chinese military forces, it is safe to say that at least since the mid-2000s, China began to meet the condition that contributes to the ‘restrictive strategic environment’.

China’s Revisionism from the Perspective of Japan and Sino–Japanese Relations

There are two perspectives to examine Sino–Japanese relations with reference to realist paradigm: (1) cross-strait relations in which Japan might become entangled in the name of its US alliance and (2) its expansion of the regional influence over territorial issues to

see its revisionism (Fravel, 2007). Examination of the literature on these three issues enables us to see the remaining conditions to assess the strategic environment. In short, China's revisionism stance has strengthened with the increased likelihood of inflicting harm on Japan within an increasingly restrictive strategic environment.

Cross-strait relations and Japan's potential involvement

'Cross-strait relations' generally refers to the relationship between China and Taiwan and the political status of Taiwan, which is separated by the Taiwan Strait in the West Pacific Ocean, close to the Ryukyu Islands in Japan and partly consists of the East China Sea (Zuo, 2016). The term primarily stems from the Korean War and the ideological chasm between the US and China during the Cold War. For the US, despite the absence of diplomatic relations with Taiwan, there has been tension between the US/Taiwan and China.

Although Japan did not meddle with the US regarding the Cross-Strait issues during the Cold War, since the mid-1990s, both the MOFA minister and the chief Cabinet secretary publicly stated that a renewed US-Japan Guidelines for Security Cooperation includes Japan's co-operation in the conflict (Asahi Shimbun, 1997a). This is all the more significant because Japan showed its willingness to join a potential conflict right after the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis. It caused a series of missile tests and military drills surrounding the Taiwan Strait due to the statement of Taiwan's president in the US to move away from the one-China policy (Zuo, 2016). The US responded by sending the largest display of US military power in Asia since the Vietnam War (Bush, 2005). This shows that whenever China uses the military to challenge the status quo, the US inevitably gets involved.

In the early 2000s, the tension did not seem to ease through the agreement of the 1992 consensus, namely, that there is one China with disagreement over what it means to both sides, with the increasing aggressive stance of China (Mearsheimer, 2014). However, the Anti-Secession Law was passed at China's 10th National People's Congress in 2005. This stipulates that a military means to resolve the Cross-Strait tensions are no longer excluded as an option, showing a more aggressive stance with the willingness to use coercive force (Lee, 2011). It is also noteworthy that the US has engaged in military sales to Taiwan to strengthen its military capabilities since 1979, making itself the ninth-largest recipient of arms from the US (Albert, 2018). Amongst such sales, the one

in 2010 was outstanding in that the Obama administration announced it would sell 6.4 billion USD worth of antimissile systems, against which China terminated all the military ties with the US, such as military exchange (Browne & Solomon, 2010).

As Dittmer (2017) argues, despite Xi Jinping's inauguration, which seemed to accelerate China's revisionist stance, cross-strait relations remained relatively stable. Not many events occurred under the pro-China party, such as the Third Taiwan missile crisis. However, this does not mean the tension was mitigated. As a plan, China made it very clear that the reunification of Taiwan is one of the critical national goals under what it is called 'the Chinese Dream'.

Such seemingly relative stability did not last. The election and administration of U.S. President Donald Trump agitated relations with China and the tension in the Taiwan Strait. The election of Tsai Ing-wen, along with her refusal to accept the 1992 consensus and seek independence for Taiwan, had a similar effect (Hu, 2018). In particular, Trump broke a taboo by having official contact with President Tsai by phone, to which China responded by sending an aircraft carrier to the Taiwan Strait (BBC, 2016). Accordingly, at the five-year National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Xi Jinping suggested dealing with any form of Taiwan independence attempts with its military capabilities (Ping, 2017). Since then, China increased its pressure on Taiwan for reunification by cutting off diplomatic communications, imposing economic sanctions and excluding Taiwan from participating in international forums with more military exercises (Mazza, 2018). With the worsening US-China relations, tensions have increased, and there is the potential for conflict, which may get Japan involved.

Chinese expansion of regional influence: East Asia and the South China Sea

As China grew economically and militarily, its stance towards territorial disputes became more assertive and aggressive (Montgomery, 2014). There was a clear attempt to change the balance of power in the Asia Pacific region.

Regarding the territorial disputes over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, which more directly concern Japan than the South China Sea, Japan's behaviour is a trigger for the issue. Since the 2000s, Japan has ensured its alliance with the US, in particular, Article 5 in the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan, applies to a potential military confrontation between Japan and China. This is because

Article 5 allows the US the right to military bases in Japan in exchange for the US pledge to defend Japan (Zagoria, 2015).

The Senkaku Islands are located near the Ryukyu Islands and Taiwan, and Japan claimed sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands in 1985. The Senkaku incident in 2010 involved Chinese trawlers ‘invading’ Japanese territorial waters near the Senkaku Islands and the Japanese Coast Guard capturing Chinese crew members. Both China and Japan claimed sovereignty over the islands; hence, this incident caused protests by China (Japan Times, 2010). China prohibited the export of rare earth metal to Japan, which to the eye of Japanese policy-makers, was seen as China’s direct response to the incident despite no conceivable linkage between the incident and the ban of export (A. King & Armstrong, 2013).

Since this incident in 2010, China has been more aggressive by sending vessels within the territorial sea and the contiguous zone. Such acts were further aggravated in 2012 when then-Tokyo governor Shintaro Ishihara purchased and nationalised the islands. As a result, the number of Chinese vessels in the territorial sea area, which had been virtually none until 2011, increased by more than 100 in 2013 and continues to increase (Japan Coast Guard, 2018). Although the number of increased vessels did not cause Japan to take any coercive actions, some military analyses proposed that a military confrontation could happen at any time because of ‘individuals’, as the case of collision incident demonstrated (Luce & Johnson, 2016).

According to Lim, Ju, and Li (2017), China’s growing assertiveness in the South China Sea confirms its revisionist stance. This poses a security challenge to Japan, although Japan is not directly involved in the territorial disputes. The South China Sea extends from the Karimata and Malacca Straits to the Taiwan Straits; the sea consists of maritime boundaries and islands, reefs and banks over which China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei claim sovereignty. While the countries, including China, signed an agreement in 2011 to set a framework for resolving territorial disputes, China built and developed an artificial island even though the tribunal was issued to reject China’s sovereignty over the islands (Perlez, 2016). To Japan, the South China Sea is an essential route for importing goods; 80% of oil import is conducted through this sea lane (Yamada, 2016). The South China Sea has been regarded as ‘free of navigation’ by Japan and the US. However, if China kept enlarging its voice in the region and claimed it an exclusive economic zone, Japan would be

unable to import as it does now (Koda, 2016).

Yet China has not shown any sign of slowing down its activities; rather, since 2015, it has gone so far as to build military facilities on the artificial island (Watkins, 2015). These actions strengthen the Chinese view of ‘protecting the territory’ (Watts & Dou, 2018). The US kept weighing the disputes but did not delay the process of China’s expansion in the area. The US revealed that China seems to plan to place ‘floating nuclear power plants’ on the islands (Tweed, 2018).

In summary, China has possessed the economic and military capability to inflict harm on Japan since the 2000s as it has both nuclear and offensive ballistic missiles (the first condition to constitute a threat). Given the emergence of territorial disputes with the increasingly accentuated China’s revisionism (Lim, Ju and Li 2017), which does not rule out ‘non-peaceful’ means to achieve security, China has grown its hostility to challenge Japan to harm the core interests of Japan (the second condition) (Fravel, 2007). However, the sense of imminence (the third condition) is hard to measure because there is a lot of uncertainty (Kim, 2015). China, with its growth, has made the strategic environment ‘restrictive’ already in the 2000s and make it increasingly restrictive as time elapsed.

4.3 North Korea

Arguably, North Korea adds an extra sense of threat in comparison to China as it meets the three conditions to constitute a threat. North Korea emerged as a threat much earlier than China in the 1990s with a series of dangerous and sceptical behaviours. It is also important to note that the North Korean economy is absent in the analysis due to its small size—its value is less than 0.01% of the world economy.

North Korean Development of Military Capability

While a military confrontation between North and South Korea was a concern to Japan during the Cold War era, it was not until the 1990s that North Korea emerged as a potential threat in East Asia with a missile test (known as the 1993–94 first North Korean nuclear crisis). There was already a strong sense of danger from North Korea, who pursued nuclear weapons by secretly building a plutonium plant at Yongbyon despite the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1985 (Niksich,

2010). Eight years later, in response to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which inspected the process of shutting down nuclear-related facilities and concluded that North Korean efforts lacked transparency and were insufficient, North Korea withdrew from the IAEA. In 1994, however, North Korea agreed to denuclearisation in exchange for a security guarantee and economic aid from the US and its allies (Michishita, 2010). Japan did not and still does not have any diplomatic relations with North Korea, thus enhancing uncertainty and potential risks to regional stability.

What turned out to be decisive proof for North Korean military capability was the 1998 missile test of Taepodong-1, an intermediate-range ballistic missile, over Japan (Hagstrom, 2015). While North Korea already had developed Nodong-class missiles by then, which put Japan within its range, the 1998 missile test showed that North Korea could launch a missile to hit a target without any malfunctions mid-course (Niksich, 2010). Furthermore, North Korea officially withdrew from the NPT in 2003. The stated reason for its withdrawal was the US's hostile policy towards North Korea and the threat of a pre-emptive nuclear strike (Kouo, 2006). This explicit hostility towards the US put Japan in a crisis because the US is Japan's most significant ally, the US has military bases in Japan, and Japan has no diplomatic relations with North Korea.

Since then, North Korea has continued to upgrade its military capability. Although North Korea made occasional attempts to justify its use of nuclear powers for civilian purposes, Forster (2014) argues that it can provide only local electricity, not the national level. In 2005, North Korea openly admitted that it has developed and now possesses nuclear weapons (New York Times, 2006). While the US increasingly termed North Korea as the 'axis of evil', along with Iran and Iraq, North Korea made constant threats towards the US, such as a statement that implied it would provide nuclear weapons to terrorists if the US continued its hostility towards North Korea (Davenport, 2018).

Following the unsuccessful six-party talks amongst China, Japan, North Korea, Russia, South Korea, and the United States, North Korea tested the Taepodong-II in 2006. While North Korea claimed its 1998 launch involved a rocket, in 2006, it officially tested seven missiles, including short and medium-range missiles, and detonated a nuclear device (Niksich, 2010). Clear development of North Korean missile capability is seen in 2009 when North Korea conducted missile and nuclear tests. Two three-stage Taepodong-II missiles were launched: the first was a satellite and the second flew more than 3,000 km, increasing the probability of inflicting harm to even the US (Hess, 2009).

In the face of the threat from the US, North Korea used the missile test to prove its possession of a nuclear weapon to protect itself. North Korea also withdrew from the six-party talks, which was the solo channel of official dialogue through which multiple parties could negotiate and exert pressure (Michishita, 2010).

Another change occurred when North Korean leader Kim Jong Il died in 2011 and his son Kim Jong Un succeeded him at the age of 28. Initially, it was uncertain whether the behaviour of North Korea would change and how long the young leader would remain in power (Buzo, 2018). However, North Korea again showed off the development of its missile capability through two missile tests in 2012. According to Kang (2013), the main development is the successful combination of uranium centrifuge facility and ICBM. This combination means North Korea has the capability to put an ICBM in the targeted satellite orbit with an enhanced range.

Meanwhile, North Korea's intention to inflict direct harm on Japan is evident. In 2013, a North Korean newspaper reported that should Japan participate in a potential military confrontation with the US and South Korea against North Korea, Japan would be hit by a nuclear weapon (Asahi Shimbun, 2013j). Then in 2017, North Korea conducted missile tests almost every month, particularly after Trump took office. The relationship between the US and North Korea has never been worse since the Cold War ended. In Trump's 'fire and fury' speech, he warned North Korea that the US would use force against it (Zeleny, Merica & Liptak, 2017).

In addition, on 15 September 2017, North Korea issued an official statement declaring that the 'Japanese archipelago must be sunk with nuclear bombs' (Griffiths, Cohen & Berlinger, 2017). While North Korea did not directly imply an attack on Japan—at the most, it implied an attack on the US military bases in Japan—North Korea and its media an intention to attack Japan's soil 17 times in 2017 alone (Shiva, 2018). This is particularly because North Korean missile tests demonstrate that North Korea is capable of launching a missile with a miniaturised nuclear weapon, reachable to the US soil (Warrick, Nakashima & Fifield, 2017). Henry Kissinger remarked that 'if they [North Korea] continue to have nuclear weapons, nuclear weapons must spread in the rest of Asia', with the possibility of Japan to have nuclear weapons (D. E. Sanger, Sang-Hun & Rich, 2017).

Although the heightened expectation of war has been mitigated somewhat by the 2018

North Korea–US summit to agree on a bilateral framework to move towards denuclearisation, the strategic environment, already restrictive, is more so than ever.

4.4 Assessment of Japan's Strategic Environment in the 21st Century

Following the two countries' development of military capability and a brief outline of relations with Japan, this section examines if and when North Korea and China (will) meet the criteria of evaluating the strategic environment, and whether and to what extent it is 'restrictive' or 'permissive'. The criteria are '(1) revisionism or expressed hostility to harm the state's territorial integrity or core interests; (2) the economic and military capability to inflict harm on the state, which in turn depends on geography and technology; and (3) a sense of imminence (i.e., expectations that it will use its capability to inflict harm in short order)' (Ripsman *et al.*, 2016, p. 46).

China

Since the late 1990s, China began to meet the second condition of a threat: the economic and military capability to inflict harm (Fisher, 2008). First, as the gap in military expenditure started to close between Japan and China, its missile capabilities—short, medium and long-range—enhanced. The Chinese military can inflict harm on Japan with its number of personnel and nuclear warheads. Despite the rise of its economy and military, there seems to be no intention to inflict harm nor revisionism.

The 2000s began to have a change in the regional balance of power that confirmed China's nascent revisionist behavior (Mearsheimer, 2014). Until 2004, Japan had been the largest economy with the largest military budget in the region. This status changed when China increased its military expenditure and experienced a 10-digit growth in its economy. The balance of power theory dictates that Japan, as a status quo power, is encouraged by the structure to begin balancing against China; therefore, the strategic environment regarding China in the 2000s onwards can be characterised as restrictive.

A larger and acute extent of change is observed in the 2010s as China not only overtook the Japanese economy but also displayed its revisionist stance and behavior (Lim, Ju and Li 2017). In particular, this is seen with China's stance towards territorial disputes such as the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. As if the degree of revisionist stance is

commensurate with its larger economy, China has become more assertive towards Japan. In the first half of the 2010s, China seemed to include a coercive means to realise its interests (Mearsheimer, 2014). As discussed, China began meeting the first condition (revisionism) and second condition (hostility to inflict harm to Japan), while the third condition (a sense of imminence) is uncertain.

In the second half of the 2010s, while meeting the first and second conditions, a sense of imminence may have been seen in China's militarisation of an artificial island in the South China Sea over which it claims sovereignty, which largely jeopardised its neighbouring countries, including the US (New York Times, 2017). As tensions between the US and China have intensified, the increased likelihood of confrontation between the two directly increases the sense of imminence to Japan. Japan has faced a restrictive strategic environment since the 2000s, the degree of which certainly and sharply increased with time.

North Korea

The similar pattern of increasing 'restrictiveness' of Japan's strategic environment with regard to North Korea is seen, while a sense of imminence has been more acute than the case of China. North Korea emerged as a potential threat to destabilise the region in the 1990s during which North Korea tested missiles twice over Japan (Michishita, 2010). This confirms North Korea's potential to inflict harm on Japan despite the small size of its economy.

In the 2000s, North Korea's capability was not only confirmed but also strengthened by the development of its missile and official admittance of possessing nuclear weapons (Kang, 2013). North Korea officially withdrew from the negotiation table from the six-party talks and withdrew from the legally binding NPT, substantially increasing its perception as a threat (Niksch, 2010). In the 2000s, North Korea thus began to meet the first condition, together with the second condition, to evaluate the strategic environment and resulted in making the strategic environment 'restrictive' to Japan.

The strategic environment worsened to a more substantial degree in the 2010s. Its constant development of missile technologies should be mentioned, as the tension between North Korea and the US was heightened. North Korea officially showed an intention to inflict harm on Japan without hesitation, even using nuclear weapons,

which added an acute sense of imminence as the third condition (Davenport, 2018). North Korean brinkmanship has intensified to the point where, in 2017, it implied an attack on Japan 17 times (Shiva, 2018). Thus, since the 2010s, North Korea—in the eyes of Japan—has met all the conditions and made the strategic environment more restrictive than ever.

Conclusion: Japan's Behaviour in the Changing Strategic Environment

Since the 2000s, Japan has faced an increasingly restrictive strategic environment in which theory dictates it should balance against the two threats. Since the 2010s, the environment is almost extremely restrictive to Japan. As discussed in the previous chapter, two theoretically driven behaviours are expected to be seen. In the name of defensive realism, Japan would focus on enhancing defensive capabilities through BMD, and constitutional revision would not be actively pursued (Lind, 2004). However, Japan would seek external balancing with the US, suggestive of the constitutional reinterpretation to eliminate some of the obstacles (Watanabe, 2016). This all depends on the restrictiveness of the strategic environment. Nonetheless, since the 2010s, the further restrictiveness indicates that the degree of enhancing BMD would be furthered and the likelihood of pursuing CSD will be substantially increased.

Another path that Japan could theoretically take is driven by offensive realism. With the maximisation of power as a prime means to achieve security, Japan will not only enhance BMD but also pursue offensive capabilities, even in BMD, such as counter-strike capabilities, including cruise missiles and aircraft carriers (Takahashi, 2005). Moreover, as the constitution prohibits the possession of offensive weaponry and CSD as well as resolving disputes through a threat of use of military force, a constitutional revision would be pursued, the likelihood of which would increase further during the 2010s.

Japan proceeded with CSD and BMD since the 2000s by introducing BMD in 2003 and a limited allowance of CSD in 2015 with further development of BMD, including the potential acquisition of offensive capabilities, along with the increased efforts to revise the constitution (Oros, 2017). Nevertheless, how, to what extent, and why Japan behaves/balances as it did and does deviate from both defensive and offensive realist interpretations. The next two chapters delve into the case studies of CSD and BMD. As the broader impact of the structure on Japan is delineated in this chapter, the following

case studies particularly focus on the intervening variables, their respective roles in shaping Japan's behaviour, and how these intervening variables mediate the impact on structure through their causal mechanisms. The first case is the constitutional reinterpretation/revision, which has surrounded the debate of Japan's security policy for almost seven decades. Whilst many factors are argued to be influential, the case studies trace how the intervening variables come into play to explain Japan's behaviour between 2004 and 2018.

5 Case Study I: Constitutional Reinterpretations/Revision

5.1 Introduction: Evolution of Constitutional Reinterpretation

This case study examines the relationship between Japan's grand strategy and the constitution with its interpretations to argue that the accumulation of past (re)interpretations had been a prime means to adjust to the strategic environment. It also demonstrates that as the strategic environment has become more restrictive, the constitutional reinterpretations as the means have faced their limitations, leading to the evermore real possibility of the constitutional revision. The way in which the constitution is reinterpreted and the move towards the constitutional revision indicates Japan's multiple grand strategic adjustments over the last two decades.

The simple examination of the strategic environment does not tell us the degree to which Japan responded, which may have been considered a 'structural anomaly' or 'delayed' in neo-realist perspectives. The case study therefore extensively investigates the intervening variables—domestic factors—to determine under what conditions Japan has (not) responded to the strategic environment. This chapter traces and establishes the link between the constitution with its interpretations and Japan's security policy from the enactment of the constitution until 2004, when the Cabinet embarked on the actual planning of the constitutional revision.

The Constitution as an Institutionalised Symbol of 'Pacifism'

Given Japan's imperial past and loss in WWII, the constitution was recreated during the US occupation. Article 9 of the constitution—the so-called pacifist clause—reads as follows:

“ARTICLE 9. (1) Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. (2) To accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized” (Cabinet, 1946a).

Article 9 does not necessarily specify any concrete details and therefore has no

legally-binding effects; rather, it acts as guidance (Tsujimura, 2016). For instance, it does not mention the right of self-defence or even differentiate it between individual self-defence and CSD. Concerning the ‘political question’, in the famous *Sunagawa* case the Supreme Court in Japan admitted there is no unanimous interpretation of the constitution and it has to be interpreted by the government not the court (Oppler, 1961). This has left room for ‘interpretation’ of the constitution, which is how the government and policymakers reflect their views on the interpretation. Although there is ambiguity as to how the reinterpretation will take place, three acts are fixed and constitutionally prohibited: (1) the renunciation of war as a sovereign right, (2) the non-possession of ‘war potential’ and (3) the renunciation of the right of belligerency of the state. In combination with the third act, Japan is constitutionally unable to behave in a hostile manner or engage in combat with aggressive or assertive intent (Hatake, 2006).

Even this very constitution includes ‘the government interpretation’, which in the end allows the right of individual self-defence. The original constitution lacked the phrase ‘to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph’; it was proposed by Hitoshi Ashida, who served as chair of the ‘Special Constitutional Revision Committee’, and was added by the Diet during a debate (Dower, 1999). This phrase was added to recognise the right of individual self-defence. Without it, the constitution implies that land, sea and air forces will never be maintained. However, adding this phrase specifies that Japan’s ultimate goal is to ‘aspir[e] sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order’, taking precedence over the second clause of non-possession of land, sea and air forces. This suggests that if a country wages war against Japan, then Japan can implement some military measures for the sake of international peace based on ‘justice and order’—a concept known as the ‘Ashida amendment’ (Urata, 2017).

Arguably, this lack of specification of the right of self-defence and the ambiguity of the pacifist constitution as a whole serves as a malleable concept. Figuratively speaking, the very ambiguity and the means of constitutional ‘interpretation’ for the government planted a seed for later generations to nurture the state’s latent realist sense to full blossom with its substantial expansion through subsequent reinterpretations, which took 70 years.

Two Ways to Change the Implication of the Constitution: ‘Cabinet Decision’ and ‘Enactment of Law’

The interpretation of the constitution changed substantially in two ways within 10 years of its enactment. First, there was the enactment of new laws to institutionally fix the reinterpretation of the constitution. It started in 1952 with the establishment of the predecessors to the SDF—the Coastal Safety Force and National Safety Force—which were created with the newly created law to recognise their entities (Dower, 1999). Inevitably, there was a discussion as to ‘war potential’ and non-possession of land, sea and air forces. At this point, Shigeru Yoshida, the then-prime minister, took a stand on non-possession of the right of self-defence and defined ‘war potential’ as military units or capabilities that could be used in ‘modern warfare’ (Kusunoki, 2009). In providing a definition, he stated these two forces were no different than the police force as a Cabinet decision (*seihu kenkai*).

However, this interpretation soon changed due to the shifting strategic environment through the Korean War and the emerging ideological conflict between liberalism and communism. Known as ‘reverse course’, the US requested that Japan establish a military force given the dispatch of the US military to Japan for the Korean War (Sasaki & Nakanishi, 2017). Accordingly, in 1957 the Hatoyama Cabinet issued a decision to put forward a new reinterpretation of the constitution that recognised the right of self-defence, a stance almost permanently fixed through the enactment of the Self-Defence Law to create the SDF (Buckley, 1992). The huge difference lies in the interpretation: while the Yoshida statement did not anticipate Japan’s role against any foreign attacks, Hatoyama’s interpretation redefined the role of military forces for national defence (Inada & Satou, 2011). Due to the ambiguity of the constitution, such interpretation is not as constrained as it seems. Rather than revising the constitution, Japan chose to reinterpret the constitution to respond to the strategic environment.

Japan’s Avoidance of the Strategic Environment: The Effective Use of the Constitution to Maintain Autonomy During the Cold War

Post-WWII, policymakers often made the most of the ‘constitutional barrier’ to resist the incentives given by the strategic environment, which ultimately is firmly entrenched institutionally as the grand strategy of the Yoshida Doctrine. Yoshida, the then-prime minister, used the constitution as a shield and bargaining power (Pyle, 2007). Ultimately,

Japan upgraded the small military force to the SDF, which was half the size requested by the US. While the agreement of Mutual Defence Assistance (MDA) was signed, the Cabinet decision was issued to reassure there constitutionally would be no possibility of the SDF being dispatched overseas to help the US (House of Councilors, 1954),

In the 1960s, Japan further institutionalised its resistance to establish a military-industrial complex by making the ban on arms export a Cabinet decision—known as self-imposed constraints (Tomita, 2011). This was further strengthened in the 1970s to restrict even the transfer of technology.

In addition to the government, institutions also rallied around the constitution. For instance, the Science Council of Japan stated upon its establishment in 1950 that research about war would not be conducted. The statement was renewed in 1967 to include a prohibition on research for military purposes (Science Council of Japan, 2017).

To suppress US pressure to expand the SDF's role and its size, the additional interpretation was given to Article 9, 'the minimum necessary for self-defence'. It played a role in limiting Japan's potential for enhancing military capability. In the Diet debate, questions arose as to the financial limit on the 'security capability to the minimum necessary degree' for the sake of the constitution because the ambiguity lies in the definition of itself (House of Representatives, 1962). Ikeda, the then-prime minister, stated that given the economic circumstances, the defence budget should always be the minimum degree necessary in the 5-year medium-term defence plan, issued in 1962 (House of Representatives, 1962).

Since 1967, the defence budget has been less than 1% of GDP, which was institutionalised through a Cabinet decision in 1971 favouring a 1% ceiling on defence spending. The justification for this drove a wedge against US pressure as Michitaro Sakata, the then-chief of the DA, stated that as long as the US-Japan security alliance maintains, the defence budget obviates more than 1% of GDP on defence expenditure (House of Representatives, 1975). Given the increasing use of space for military exploration, later dubbed 'Star Wars', the Diet debate suggests there was a growing concern for Japan's potential use of space for military purposes both domestically and internationally (House of Representatives, 1969a). This led to the Cabinet decision to restrict the use of space for only 'peaceful purposes' (House of Representatives, 1969b),

the definition of which is much stricter than the International Space Law that allows the use of space for military purposes, such as spy satellites, unless it is for nuclear weapon tests (Nuclear Threat Initiative, 2011).

As Pyle (2007, p. 235) explains, 'Japan would respond to US pressure with the minimum concessions necessary to maintain the alliance relationship, invoking the constitution to justify the minimalist approach'. Furthermore, 'As the years of the Cold War system stretched out, his [Yoshida's] successors took his tactical approach and made it doctrine. They elaborated it into a grand strategy that reverberated for many years to come' (Pyle, 2007, p. 240). Japan eventually succeeded in avoiding involvement in the international system as it wanted and maintained autonomy despite the strong external pressure and the changing strategic environment during the Cold War.

Japan's nascent adjustment to the strategic environment through constitutional 'reinterpretation' post-Cold War

Although Japan resisted the incentives from the strategic environment given its unprecedented economic growth during the Cold War era, Japan finally adjusted to the strategic environment in the 1990s. This is primarily because Japan's grand strategy was predicated on the reassurance of US security providence, which was a critical juncture after the disappearance of the Soviet Union, gave rise to US engagement in East Asia (Green, 2001). Japan's substantial financial contributions to the Gulf War without 'boots on the ground'—130 billion USD—were not appreciated by the US. In hindsight, this was a turning point for policymakers in Japan because its grand strategy based on the Yoshida Doctrine no longer justified an economy first and security second approach (Funabashi, 1997).

Japan could not immediately respond to the post-Cold War era, however, because it had spent decades mobilising considerable political resources to establish a variety of constitutional barriers (Pyle, 2007). Japan, therefore, adopted a gradual process to change the self-imposed interpretation, such as the prohibition of CSD, that once served its national interests and again manipulate it for security purposes. This 'reverse course' was no mean feat because established interpretations are not only institutionally fixed but also culturally and socially entrenched.

The first attempt to revise the constitutional interpretation occurred in the midst of the Gulf War in 1991 to legalise 'the dispatch of the SDF overseas' to non-conflict zones in PKOs (Funabashi, 1997). The restriction to non-conflict zones lay in the constitutional interpretation. The constitution does prohibit the use of force per se and a means to settle international disputes, and most PKO missions involve the use of force.

Now that the dispatch of the SDF was allowed, albeit at that time only for PKOs, it was not difficult to extend its application to the context of the US-Japan alliance. This attempt materialised in the US-Japan Defence Cooperation in 1997, along with the packages of legislation, as the Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan Law (The Law Concerning Measures to Secure Peace and Safety of Japan in Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan) (Fisher, 1999). The most significant part of this legislation in light of the past constitutional is the fact that 'areas surrounding Japan' were intentionally ambiguous; 'areas surrounding Japan' is not geographic but situational (M. Noda, 1998). Japan, depending on the 'situation', could provide logistical support, facilities such as airports and rear area support even when the US is engaged in combat operations (MOFA, 1997). The guidelines are criticised for the 'erosion of Japanese pacifism' (Fisher, 1999). Combined with the US alliance and PKO missions, there are virtually no geographical limits as to the role of the SDF as long as its involvement lacks the use of force.

In addition, the Anti-terrorism Law and the Special Iraq Law allow the SDF to engage in US-led military operations via logistical support. This support includes the transport of military weapons and ammunition, which is controversial in the form of *ittaiika*, whereby indirect participation in the use of force by other militaries violates the conditions against the use of force (Kliman, 2006). The use of force overseas was constitutionally prohibited because it is highly likely to violate the prohibition of CSD. Furthermore, the concept of the use of force was slightly expanded by the amendment of the PKO law. This allows the SDF to join the UN Peacekeeping Force by using the force not only for self-defence but also for the protection of military equipment, thereby expanding the areas of the SDF's activity (M. Noda, 1998).

In a nutshell, the constitutional reinterpretation evolved around the strategic environment. As an effective diplomatic shield, the constitutional interpretations had developed in a way in which policymakers kept the US pressure at bay during the Cold War. However, having been acutely aware of the incompatibility of the constitutional

interpretation regarding the expectation of the international security environment, Japan rose to the occasion by adjusting its constitutional interpretations step by step. It all began with the stretch of the constitutional interpretation to allow the possession of the right of self-defence and necessary quasi-military organisation and capability. Because the constitution does not specify the right of self-defence in any explicit manner, the concept of self-defence has been highly political where the interests and intentions of policymakers are wielded through the reinterpretation (Dower, 1999).

One critical hindrance in the constitutional interpretation is the use of force. Due to the constitutional prohibition, unless it is for self-defence, it is far-fetched to expand the concept of the conditions regarding the use of force more than the current interpretation. While the use of force abroad could be allowed in the protection of military weapons and for self-defence, as long as the use of force is based on self-defence, its detachment seems unthinkable through further constitutional reinterpretation (Boyd & Samuels, 2005). Unless policymakers identify an alternative way, there seems to be a certain degree of limitation on the constitutional reinterpretation without revision.

As expected, the Koizumi administration finally went on to argue the need for the allowance of CSD in 2004 and the constitutional revision. This is arguably when all the major constitutional reinterpretations regarding Article 9 and the relevant enactment of legislatures were completed, which inevitably led to the CSD. Because the nature of CSD is so controversial, many argue it is not constitutionally possible without revision. The debate regarding potential constitutional revision also intensified. Koizumi asked LDP officials to draft the constitution by 2005 when the LDP would celebrate 50 years since its establishment (Asahi Shimbun, 2005o) .

Hypotheses

First, as outlined, the assessment of the strategic environment surrounding Japan underlines the basic line to determine whether Japan shifts to a more realist-oriented grand strategy (either defensive or offensive) from hedging or soft-balancing. Moreover, depending on the permissive or restrictive degree, the strategy can shift from soft balancing to hedging and from defensive to offensive realist type behaviour, the determinant of which is left to the role of the intervening variables. Japan has a means for each grand strategy. The option for soft balancing is that Japan purely does not attempt the constitutional revision/reinterpretation; instead, it pursues security through non-military means, such as diplomacy and economic interdependence. Hedging

includes some initial attempt or consideration of both constitutional revision and BMD. Defensive realist strategy suggests the allowance of CSD (limited) while not aggressively pursuing the constitutional revision for a more active role in international security. Last, with an offensive realist strategy, Japan looks for the way to achieve the constitutional revision to attain a full degree of CSD.

The hypotheses of the outcome of Japan's constitutional revision/reinterpretation depend on the interplay of the three intervening variables. The two concepts help to hypothesise the intervening variables. In the case of CSD, political legitimacy plays a crucial role. As discussed, the socially accepted norm of anti-militarism has empirically shown the aversion to CSD. Therefore, the restrictive environment, as well as political stability, is a quintessential condition to pursue CSD. Table 5.1 shows the hypotheses to analyse Japan's grand strategic adjustment and proceed with the process tracing of the constitutional interpretation/revision in the following chapter.

Table 5.1 Hypotheses of the Case of Article 9

Hypothesis number	Grand strategic shift	Hypothesis
H1	Soft balancing	A non-military tool to conduct Japan's security policy. CSD is pursued because of the permissive nature of the given strategic environment.
H2	Hedging	CSD are under consideration but not actively pursued in the relatively permissive strategic environment.
H3	Defensive realist	In the restrictive environment, defensive capabilities are enhanced, and the constitutional revision may or may not be pursued depending on the need for external balancing.
H4	Offensive realist	In the more restrictive strategic environment, Japan actively pursues the full-degree of CSD.

5.2 Constitutional Reinterpretation/Revision Between 2004 and 2008

As discussed in the previous section, CSD has long been a sought-after objective for the LDP (Kitaoka, 2008). The Cabinet successfully manipulated the interpretation of the constitution, such as the war contingency laws and the PKO laws, where geographical limitations for the SDF were eliminated, and the only fundamental restriction is in the area of 'the use of force' (Fisher, 1999). CSD, where the use of force is allowed not only outside Japan but also for other countries, is possible through two means: constitutional revision or interpretation. Nevertheless, based on the CLB's interpretation and the Cabinet statement, the constitutional revision seems at first glance to be the only way (Sakata & Kawaguchi, 2014). A nascent aggravating strategic environment in this period kept incentivising Japan to upgrade its defence capabilities by strengthening the US alliance through CSD or possibly go on to hard-balancing through offensive capabilities.

However, constitutional revision is far more difficult than policymakers envisioned and requires co-ordination at all levels, including the public, opposition parties and coalition partner. Constitutional revision is predicated on an entire revision rather than a partial amendment. The period saw the evolvement of the discussion, paving the way for the long road to constitutional revision through the enactment of the referendum law. Therefore, symbolic significance can be seen through the ignition of open debates for possible ideas of constitutional revision, suggestive of the fundamental overturn of the debate, from absolute taboo to actual possibility.

With the aggravating strategic environment, close to the restrictive one and the evolving security relationship with the US, the public perception of threat has increased to the point where the idea of CSD is openly debated without any repercussions. This went in tandem with the dynamics of domestic politics where the ideological dichotomy between the LDP and the Socialist Party disappeared. However, in the end, CSD was not allowed in this period, suggestive of Japan's inability to be engaged in balancing actively. Therefore, this chapter investigates why and how such momentum could not materialise in any way to reflect on Japan's security policy despite the trend moving towards constitutional revision.

Domestic Institutions: Involving every actor as a Policy-making Process

While constitutional reinterpretation requires a majority in the Diet to materialise into reventant law(s)—or in some cases to ‘clarify’ the existing constitutional reinterpretation through the Cabinet statement—constitutional revision involves a wider range of actors. This is highlighted by the examination of the variable of a part of domestic institutions – an institutional framework for policy-making. Article 96 speculates on a basic procedure for the constitutional revision as follows.

Amendments to this Constitution shall be initiated by the Diet, through a concurring vote of two-thirds of all its members, and shall thereupon be submitted to the people for ratification, which shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of all votes cast thereon at such election as the Diet shall specify.

Amendments when so ratified shall immediately be proclaimed by the Emperor, in the name of the People, as an integral part of this Constitution. (Cabinet, 1946)

However, Article 96 remains ambiguous in many areas—the specification of procedure about the national referendum and its legislation has not even been attempted as a de facto taboo. Given the first attempt to enact the law to specify the procedure, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) issued a statement opposing the law and laying out the basis for changing the 60-year intact pacifist constitution (Mataichi, 2007). Nevertheless, Article 96 does not specify, for instance, the procedure of national referendum, including the existence of ‘minimum turnout’ and how the constitutional revision is initiated (Asahi Shimbun, 2006e). Article 56 of the Diet Law normally stipulates at least 20 members from the Lower House and 10 members from the Upper House are necessary (House of Representatives, 1947). Therefore, as a first step, the law concerning the procedure of constitutional revision must be enacted.

Moreover, even though the constitutional procedure law is enacted, there is still a need for a supermajority to pass the Diet. During this period between 2004 and 2008, the political popularity enjoyed by the LDP ended. Thus, the only possible way was to form a bipartisan or non-partisan block to constitute a quasi-supermajority, which in theory is more difficult because ideological differences must be overcome.

Therefore, the constitutional revision inevitably involves ‘everyone’ in Japan as important actors. First, a coalition-led supermajority or bipartisan/non-partisan groups need more than two-thirds of seats in both houses. Furthermore, sustainable public support is a prerequisite for a national referendum. As discussed, the prime minister’s view is also critical because it requires considerable political recourses. Without the prime minister’s advocacy or initiative, history suggests the agenda of constitutional revision did not even arise.

Leaders’ image

Leaders’ image consists of two sides: a strategic cultural view of Japan’s security policy and a way of maintaining political legitimacy. In particular, given the longevity of the constitution, it is completely plausible that leaders who aim for constitutional revision simply surrender it to maintain political stability because they incorporate and calculate the unenthusiastic public attitudes and potential institutional difficulty. Although discussed in more detail later, the examination of leaders’ strategic views and their subsequent actions well capture this dilemma and the supremacy of political stability over strategic needs when it comes to the constitutional revision given the prerequisite support from the public.

Koizumi (prime minister from 2001 to 2006) was known as a US ally due to his commitment to maintaining ties with the US, even during the US-led war on terror. After his inauguration, he chose the US for his first visit as prime minister to establish a personal relationship with then-President George W. Bush (Iijima, 2007, p. 18). His swift response and endorsement of the US-led war on terror with the relevant legislature to dispatch the SDF was considered a strengthening of the US-Japan alliance (Nakano, 2015, p. 225). It took only 24 days from the 9/11 attack and 16 days after his announcement of support of the US for the legislation (Uchiyama, 2013). He gave a response to Bush’s statement about 9/11 just one hour after; subsequently, he held a Cabinet meeting to have an agreement, suggestive of his independent thought and action as a US ally (Uchiyama, 2013). Based on his emphasis of the US-Japan alliance, Koizumi organised a research committee to investigate whether CSD was possible (Asahi Shimbun, 2004e), and he held the position that CSD should be possible through constitutional revision (Asahi Shimbun, 2001b).

As the direct successor of Koizumi, Shinzo Abe (prime minister from 2006 and 2007)

had a clearer and more explicit view on Japan's security. Abe was a US ally with goals for Japan's 'departure from the post-war regime' through a nationalist-oriented constitutional revision (Hughes, 2016). Although in his book *Towards a Beautiful Country* (*utsukushii Kuni he*) nationalistic sentiments are spread across the pages, Abe held the view of normalisation for a stronger, independent military with autonomy. However, he admitted that it is the ultimate goal; in the foreseeable future, Japan needs the US-Japan security alliance as a core security posture of Japan (Abe, 2006b, pp. 132-134). Therefore, the US-Japan alliance is the means to achieve his goal and constitutes his strategic culture as a US ally. He has long advocated CSD and constitutional revision before he was prime minister and after his resignation and return to the premiership in 2012 (Sataka, 2016).

Yasuo Fukuda's (prime minister from 2007 to 2008) father, a prime minister in the 1970s, advocated the 'Fukuda Doctrine', which emphasised Japan's relations with South-east Asia. In contrast, the strategic culture of Yasuo Fukuda leaned towards a US alliance. While serving as the chief cabinet secretary for the longest time in Japan's post-war history, Yasuo Fukuda took the lead to enact the terrorism special law for the dispatch of the SDF to the Indian Ocean to provide logistical support for the US military in 2001 (Asahi Shimbun, 2007r). When Japan decided to jointly explore the Azadegan oil field with Iran despite the US's deep concern about the latter's nuclear development, he repeatedly attempted to reconcile US reservations through diplomatic channels (Asahi Shimbun, 2007r). Although not as passionate as Koizumi and Abe, Yasuo Fukuda also advocated for constitutional revision on the ground that the concept of 'self-defence' should be clarified in line with pacifism when he served as one of the chairs of the constitution research committee in the Lower House (House of Representatives, 2005b).

Taro Aso (prime minister between 2008 and 2009) supposedly delineated the diplomatic vision under the Abe administration in 2006 (Nippon.Com, 2013). Through a media interview, Aso stated the same logic of allowing CSD as Koizumi and Abe: CSD to protect the US ships in military operations for effectively realising the arc of freedom and prosperity (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2006b). He preferred constitutional reinterpretation as a means to allow CSD (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2006c). Aso seemed less passionate than his predecessors; he implied constitutional revision possibly would take place in 30 or 40 years while admitting it was the LDP's long-held dream (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2006b). For this reason, he held a mild view of the US alliance.

The LDP shares the same attitudes as the four prime ministers towards the constitution. Yomiuri Shimbun's questionnaire conducted in 2003 (93% of returns from all the elected politicians) showed that 89% of elected LDP members favoured constitutional revision. After the 2005 Lower House general election, 81% of elected LDP politicians still supported revision (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2005b), as they did after the 2007 Upper House general election and the 2009 general election. Similar results are seen through Asahi Shimbun's survey: 90% consistently support constitutional revision (Asahi Shimbun, 2004r, 2005p, 2009c). The surveys further asked about Article 9; 74% were for CSD, whether constitutional reinterpretation or revision.

Komeito

Despite the party's principle centring on pacifism and *Seimei Sonchou* ('respect for human life'), the Komeito, as a vital coalition partner to the LDP, already had given greater leeway to the LDP in terms of constitutional revision: 77% of Komeito members showed positive attitudes towards revision in 2005 (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2005b). They held the stance of *Kaken* (adding a clause to the constitution) regarding Article 9, adding a third clause regarding the military and its role in international contributions (Asahi Shimbun, 2004p). However, there is a substantial chasm between the LDP and the Komeito over the first two clauses of Article 9. Despite the relative size of the Komeito, it is largely responsible for maintaining a majority in the Diet as the coalition in the 21st century. It, therefore, could be a veto player that the LDP must take into account.

Democratic Party of Japan (second biggest advocate for constitutional revision)

The DPJ resulted from the mergers of multiple parties and constituted the second-largest party in the 2000s. As goes the nature of political mergers, the DPJ has several political ideologies regarding security policy and constitutional revision, ranging from socialist-oriented thinking and pacifist-leaning vision to hawkish realist ideology and even nationalism (Howe & Campbell, 2013). Nevertheless, the DPJ holds the stance of *Souken* (creation of the constitution). The difference between the LDP's stance of *Kaken* (constitutional revision) and the DPJ's stance of *Souken* is the approach towards the constitution. While the LDP addresses the revision article by article, the DPJ intends to create a new constitution not necessarily based on the past constitution (Hatoyama, 2005).

However, opinions diverge internally. The Asahi survey reveals that in 2003, 61% of members leaned towards constitutional revision (Asahi Shimbun, 2003b), which increased to 72% in 2005 (Asahi Shimbun, 2005p). However, in 2007, only 30% of members favoured constitutional revision, while 30% of these in favour of the constitution did not seem to have a specific plan for revision (Asahi Shimbun, 2003a). While one-third of members constantly opposed constitutional revision, the views of a certain number of members fluctuated. Regarding Article 9, 57% of DPJ members consider it necessary to revise to allow CSD (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2004c). Given the party has the second-largest share of the seats in the Diet, the potential role of the DPJ in the constitutional revision cannot be ignored.

Koizumi's foundations

In the midst of enacting multiple security legislation during Koizumi's premiership, he set in motion a discussion of constitutional revision at the Diet level, arguably for the first time in Japan's post-war history. Koizumi himself led the party to facilitate the discussion regarding constitutional revision as well as the establishment of the procedure of constitutional revision (Asahi Shimbun, 2003d). Although the constitution research committee existed in the 2000s in both houses, under the Koizumi administration, the idea of a provisional constitutional revision was submitted to the party in 2004 (Asahi Shimbun, 2004e). Concrete full sentences of the constitutional revision were issued in 2005. The LDP's constitutional revision of Article 9 recognised the SDF as the military, eliminated the second clause of 'no possession of war potential' and included CSD by acknowledging the role of international security contributions (Asahi Shimbun, 2005d). To push the political agenda further, Koizumi personally tried to orchestrate a foundation where the bipartisan group can be made with the DPJ because of its active participation in the constitutional revision debate (Asahi Shimbun, 2004n).

However, domestic political dynamics and 'political legitimacy' largely matter in determining the degree of momentum with which the constitutional revision is pursued. Despite the DPJ's equally enthusiastic approach to revision—even issuing a mid-term report on the plan for it—the DPJ confirmed its party stance to prioritise the upcoming general election in 2005 and proceed with constitution revision later (Asahi Shimbun, 2004i). Whilst the LDP tries to make progress and enact the law of the procedure of the

revision, such discordance in the schedule makes it difficult to proceed.

Furthermore, the fact that many DPJ members previously belonged to the LDP and left in the 1990s due to frustration over the long-term view to taking over the position of the ruling party shows considerable hesitations towards co-operation with the LDP. The DPJ's gradual growth in seats (177 seats in the Lower House between 2003 and 2005), makes the party evermore ambitious for 'two-party politics'.

For such a stance, Koizumi himself commented that with the DPJ constantly saying 'no' to any LDP proposals, there would be no progress (Asahi Shimbun, 2004s). Due to the very fixed position of the DPJ, Koizumi ceased the ideas of a temporary grand coalition and proceeding with constitutional revision under his term. This decision could be seen from his statement at the UN meeting in New York that Japan aimed to be a permanent member of the UN Security Council with the current constitution, despite the common understanding that CSD is prerequisite for membership (Asahi Shimbun, 2004m). During the run-up to the election in 2005, Koizumi officially made it clear that regardless of the election result, he intended to step back after serving his term and leave the agenda of constitutional revision to his successors (Asahi Shimbun, 2005o).

This does not mean Koizumi stopped taking action completely. Even after the election, where the LDP was victorious over the DPJ, the idea of a grand coalition did not disappear. Koizumi still thought that incorporation of the biggest opposition is arguably the most effective and ideal way to push forward constitutional revision. Therefore, the LDP's overall stance is that achieving agreement with the DPJ on the law concerning the procedure of revision is the first step (Asahi Shimbun, 2005e). This is exemplified by the collective decision of the LDP to postpone the submission of the bill regarding the law given the DPJ's hesitation; despite having the seats, the LDP–Komeito coalition could railroad to enact the bill (Asahi Shimbun, 2006f). Thus, while Koizumi furthered the discussion of revision at the next level, nothing was materialised.

Abe's initiatives

The political legacy Abe inherited from Koizumi was favourable; the coalition had more than two-thirds of seats in the Lower House, a majority in the Upper House and a Cabinet support rate of 70% (generally, the support rate is about 60%) (NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute, 2018). With such political stability,

institutionally there would be no difficulty in at least passing legislation regarding the constitutional revision procedure. He showed more passion towards constitutional revision along with his revisionist slogan of ‘departure from the post-war regime’ and ‘towards a beautiful country’. After his inauguration, Abe set a time line for the constitutional revision: achieve it during his term or two terms (6 years) at the most (Asahi Shimbun, 2006a).

The law concerning the constitutional revision procedure

Abe made numerous ambitious proposals for not only constitutional revision but also other security policies such as the establishment of the NSC and upgrade of the DA to ministerial status. He first attempted to address the law concerning the constitutional revision process. Without the law, constitutional revision would be virtually impossible to initiate. Until Abe’s inauguration, there had been numerous attempts since the late 1990s to enact the law (Asahi Shimbun, 2007l) (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.2 Past Attempts to Enact the Law Concerning the National Referendum

Year	Actors	Co-actors	Reason for failure
1999	The Liberal Party	Komeito and LDP	Hesitation of co-actors
2000	LDP	Komeito	Sudden death of PM
2002	Koizumi and LDP	Komeito	Prioritisation of a response to 9/11
2004	LDP	DPJ and Komeito	Hesitation of co-actors
2005	DPJ/LDP/Komeito	DPJ and Komeito	Divergence of opinion/election focusing on other agendas

Table 5.2 shows that despite the LDP’s enthusiasm for constitutional revision, responses to immediate needs in other policy areas or crises often took precedence (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2000). The LDP did not discard the idea of forming a bipartisan group with the Komeito and the DPJ, which led to a dilemma between compromise and being at their mercy (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2002, 2004a). If the three parties successfully agreed on how constitutional revision should take place through the enactment of the law, it would

create substantial momentum to pave the way for the constitutional revision.

However, Abe's rushing attitude and political miscalculations inevitably came with substantial costs: one step forward but two steps back. First, in 2006, he set a date, 3 May, to enact the law that coincided with the Constitution Memorial Day (Asahi Shimbun, 2007i). For the date, the three-party negotiation started over relatively minor issues compared with the controversial Article 9. These issues included setting a minimum age for a referendum (over 18 versus over 20), how the vote is counted (inclusion/exclusion of faulty ballot as 'no') and media regulation during the run-up to the referendum (Asahi Shimbun, 2006e). The LDP was open to readjustment in accordance with the DPJ's request and the Komeito's concern.

Nevertheless, Abe rushed to imply the focal point of the coming general election was constitutional revision, suggesting the law of the constitutional revision procedure was not a preparation for open discussion of the revision but a necessary step towards revision (Asahi Shimbun, 2007i). This led to an inflated reservation of the DPJ; the negotiation of the law was no longer constructive but had become an arena where competition for political power took place and which was to take the lead. Immediately after Abe showed his intention to focus on the revision, Hatoyama, then-chief of the DPJ, stated that while there was not necessarily much to disagree over the details of the law, the LDP must take the DPJ's stance into account and make a 'political decision' (Asahi Shimbun, 2007k). Similarly, Ozawa, the president of the DPJ, announced that the DPJ did not necessarily need to make a decision over the law; instead, it could co-submit the bill with the condition that all DPJ requests—regardless of past negotiation—be reflected in a new bill (Asahi Shimbun, 2007m).

Thus, there was a dilemma for the LDP. On the one hand, reflecting DPJ's request on the bill shows LDP's compromise to the DPJ, which instead might allow the enactment of the law smoothly. On the other hand, Komeito showed dissatisfaction as it was largely left out the negotiation as the main coalition partner with the LDP. The frustration of the Komeito would increase the risk of dissolution of the coalition (Asahi Shimbun, 2007j).

This created division within the party as to the priority of the law: agreement with the DPJ or a shift towards unilateral enactment (Asahi Shimbun, 2007k). Before the LDP making a decision, through a representative meeting, the DPJ decided to adopt a

strategy to use the law to jeopardise the LDP by highlighting the fact that the LDP prioritised the revision over other more important issues, such as economic inequality (Asahi Shimbun, 2007j). Accordingly, there emerged a voice within the LDP that the original plan of the law should be submitted rather than the modified one with the DPJ, although the LDP ended up submitting a negotiated version, which partially satisfied needs from the DPJ and Komeito (Asahi Shimbun, 2007l). Nevertheless, the LDP also decided to compete with the DPJ over the issue of the constitutional revision procedure by pointing out the divergence and indecisiveness of the DPJ on any issue (Asahi Shimbun, 2007e). The initial promising situation of a grand coalition fell apart and a deep chasm formed between the LDP and DPJ.

The disappearance of a plan to co-operate with the DPJ gave the Komeito leverage as its relative importance increased with its seats in the Diet to pass the bill, which caused a further delay in the constitutional revision process (Asahi Shimbun, 2007n). Because the Komeito were against the revision, it kept stating that it was premature to proceed the revision and further discussion was needed to manage its dilemma between weak coalition partner and party's principle (Asahi Shimbun, 2007i). It made the most of this situation and put its request such as minimum age to vote on one part of the law, which both the DPJ and LDP had already agreed. This was the secured time for discussing the constitutional revision after the enactment of the law, although the DPJ and the LDP agreed on two years during which no submission or plan of the revision is allowed.

In the end, the law was enacted in 2007. The newly enacted law of the procedure of the constitutional revision stipulated there could not be any attempt to plan or submit any revision plans for the next three years until 2010. Although the period was initially two years, the Komeito extended it by a year. This suggested that no attempt could be made until 2010, and given the time of Diet debate and the period (60–180 days) before the referendum, Abe faced substantial difficulty achieving the revision during his term. A premiership could only be extended to a second term, which meant Abe would have to step down in 2012. Considering how the law concerning the constitutional revision procedure took eight years to enact, it would not be likely that Abe would achieve his goal.

Collective Self-Defence

Abe used different approaches to the constitutional revision and CSD, the former of

which focused on procedure while the latter focused on constitutional reinterpretation. The constitutional reinterpretation to allow CSD caused some suspicion and reservations within the LDP. Sadakazu Tanigaki, who competed against Abe for the LDP's presidential election, explicitly advocated the need for revision to allow CSD (Asahi Shimbun, 2006n). He proposed a different angle that could be applied to find a de facto loophole to allow CSD. What he meant is that in cases of the US-Japan alliance, the consequence of 'attack by others' could damage Japan, such as a third country's attack on US ships that jointly sail with Japan's counterparts near the sea of Japan (Asahi Shimbun, 2006k). Thus, he tried to shift the attention on CSD to some practical hindrance as minor issues. However, while it could be wise to deal with CSD through reinterpretation as a separate issue from the revision, it would reduce the likelihood of the future constitutional revision. CSD had been a driving force for the constitutional revision; therefore, allowing CSD through the reinterpretation may lose the substantial motive for the revision.

Nevertheless, Abe created a research team on CSD, which he argued should comprise members of the CLB, MOFA and MOD (Asahi Shimbun, 2006b). His ambitious vision to revolutionise Japan's security policy during his term made him rush to proceed. He kept pushing the CSD timeframe by stating that the related research should not take so much time (Asahi Shimbun, 2007s). However, given the CLB's stance to keep the current interpretation, which did not facilitate the discussion of the possibilities of CSD, Abe decided to recruit members who shared similar views on CSD (Asahi Shimbun, 2007a). In the end, he chose political scientists and IR scholars such as Shinichi Kitaoka, Kazuya Sakamoto and Masamori Sase, all of whom expressed the need for CSD in the Diet or published articles (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2007a). This collection of scholars became the prime minister's private advisory board.

Acute criticism arose regarding such an approach with a foregone conclusion from the coalition partner (Asahi Shimbun, 2007n), the public, opposition parties (Asahi Shimbun, 2007o) and even hawkish LDP members such as Ishiba (Asahi Shimbun, 2007q). Abe temporarily shifted his focus on political stability during the run-up to the election in 2007 by not making it a campaign focal point (Asahi Shimbun, 2007t). This was done even though the advisory board kept organising meetings to finalise cases where CSD should and can be allowed. The advisory board proposed four major scenarios where CSD was in line with the current interpretation or where individual self-defence could be applied:

- (1) When Japan and the US are conducting joint exercises in international waters, SDF warships may strike back if U.S. ships come under attack.
- (2) Japan may use its missile defence system to intercept a ballistic missile if it is believed to be targeting the US.
- (3) SDF members carrying out U.N. peacekeeping activities may counterattack if armed forces of other countries are being attacked.
- (4) SDF personnel, while unable to provide support through force, can provide logistic support, such as transporting supplies and materials, to armed forces of other countries. (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2007b)

The report published by the panel argued that points (3) and (4) could deal with the right of individual self-defence. First, Article 9 emphasised ‘a means of settling international disputes’ as the condition under which the renunciation of war as a sovereign right was promised and land, sea and air forces and other ‘war potential’ will never be maintained. In other words, the panel considered UN peacekeeping activities as not ‘a means of settling international disputes’ and hence ‘collective security’ should be possible under the current constitutional interpretation. Regarding (4), it argued there were past interpretations to only allow logistic support to armed forces of other countries, such as participation in the US-led Iraq war in 2003, as legislation of specified duration. Thus, the attempt to interpret the constitution to allow such support was not unconstitutional (Cabinet Office, 2008a).

However, even before the official report was submitted to the Cabinet, Abe resigned for health reasons, which rendered the attempt abortive simply because the subsequent prime ministers did not take the agenda forward with the report. It may, however, be important to note that despite his short premiership, even less than a year, arguably the degree of progress per se was the most substantial in post-war history by breaking the two taboo subjects: CSD and the enactment of the constitutional revision procedure.

The hesitation of leaders: Fukuda and Aso

The LDP’s loss in the 2007 general election created a *Nejire Kokkai* (divided Diet) due to the ruling coalition losing a majority in the Upper House while holding it in the Lower House (Shinoda, 2013). Because an attempt at enacting law can be rejected by the sheer number of members of the opposition parties in the Upper House, this made

the revision more difficult. Accordingly, subsequent prime ministers strategically hesitated to take a step further in the constitutional revision. Furthermore, the newly enacted law of the procedure of the constitutional revision stipulated there could not be any attempt to plan or submit any revision plans for the next three years until 2010.

Yasuo Fukuda, Abe's successor, decided to discard most of Abe's initiatives. In his inauguration speech, unlike Abe who without hesitation talked about CSD and the constitutional revision in his speech (Abe, 2006a), did not even touch these issues, and he first proposed the slogan 'recovery of trust of politicians and bureaucracy' (*Seiji to Gyosei ni Taisuru Shinrai no Kaihuku*) (Fukuda, 2007). As with LDP's strategy of adapting and absorbing opposition parties' policy, Yasuo Fukuda emphasised social welfare, childcare and inequality. At the Diet meeting, when asked about CSD, he simply answered there was a need to discuss it but with care and caution (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2008d).

Yasuo Fukuda was—or pretended to be—not only disinterested in the issue of constitutional revision but also overly hesitant in CSD. The way he dealt with the Abe-led private panel further signified his hesitation. He first arranged to receive the final report from the panel after closing the Diet to avoid criticism by delaying the submission for more than nine months in June 2007 (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2008d). Even though the report was 'final', he commented they would conduct research on the report further, suggestive of the absence of the implications of the report. The media was even prohibited from taking a picture of when he received the final report to minimise their respective media report (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2008c). Nevertheless, even before the next Diet opened in September, Yasuo Fukuda resigned because the Cabinet support rate plummeted from less than 60% to just above 20% after seven months of his premiership without any sign of improvement (FactoBox, 2016).

In comparison with Fukuda, Aso had a stronger view to support CSD through the constitutional reinterpretation. However, he showed no intention of addressing the issue of CSD at the media interview at the time of his inauguration (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2008b). This seemingly contradictory stance stemmed from the leaders' dilemma between their strategic culture and political legitimacy, which is often clearer when the general election approaches.

The general election occurred the following summer in 2009. Allegedly, the Cabinet

considered CSD a long-term issue after the election. Nevertheless, Abe, having close ties with Aso, apparently took the liberty of arranging a meeting between Aso and Shuji Yanai, the chair of Abe's private panel that submitted the report in 2006 to allow CSD (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2009c). Abe tried to talk Aso into including CSD in the LDP's manifesto for the upcoming election (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2009c). However, Aso did not take any particular action even though his private advisory panel was supposed to consider Japan's next National Defence Programme Guidelines (NDPG) and advocate similar views to allow CSD (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2009d). This is, in fact, natural because some of the members of Aso's panel consisted of members of Abe's panel as well as Shinichi Kitaoka (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2009a). The Aso administration finally begins to proceed. However, the landslide victory of the DPJ in the 2009 general election ended such an attempt and made the LDP descend from political grace. Thus, none of the three ministers was given time to proceed CSD in the end.

State-society relations

State-society relations—both the public and social/economic groups—did not play a particularly important role. For the public, the state of the constitutional revision did not develop to the point where the public had substantial weight (i.e. the constitutional revision referendum did not occur). The public indirectly influenced the Cabinet through its 'Cabinet support rate', making the ruling coalition prioritise political stability over a controversial agenda, which, however, has little to do with the Cabinet stance regarding the constitutional revision and CSD. Nevertheless, one thing is clear: pushing for the constitutional revision or CSD is considered an unideal means to maintain or increase the political stability of the government. In this sense, public perception is well calculated in advance by leaders.

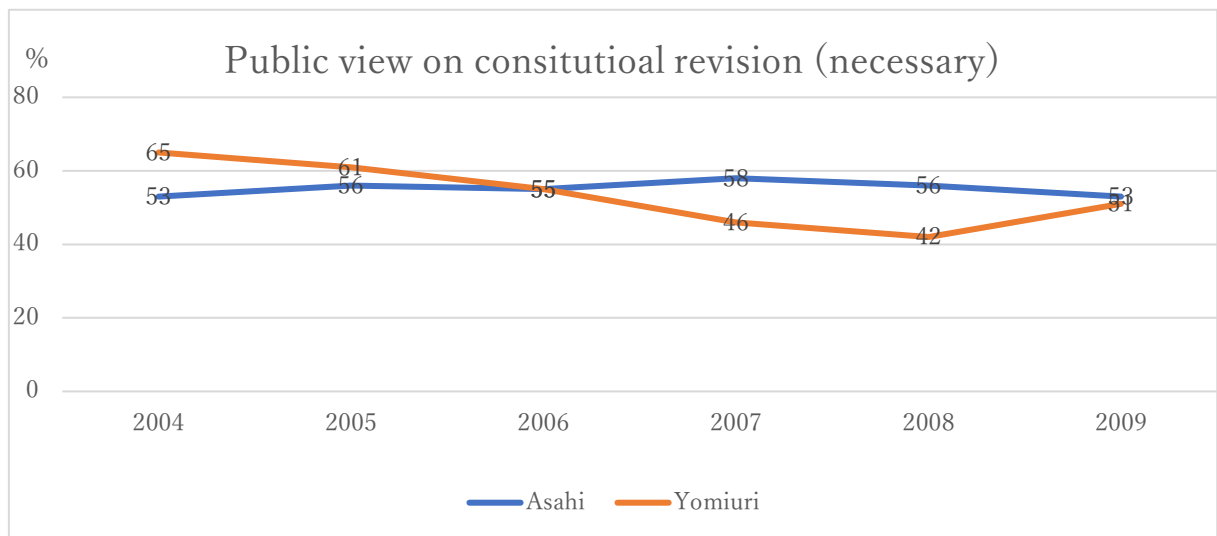


Figure 5.1 The Proportion of the Public Supporting the Constitutional Revision

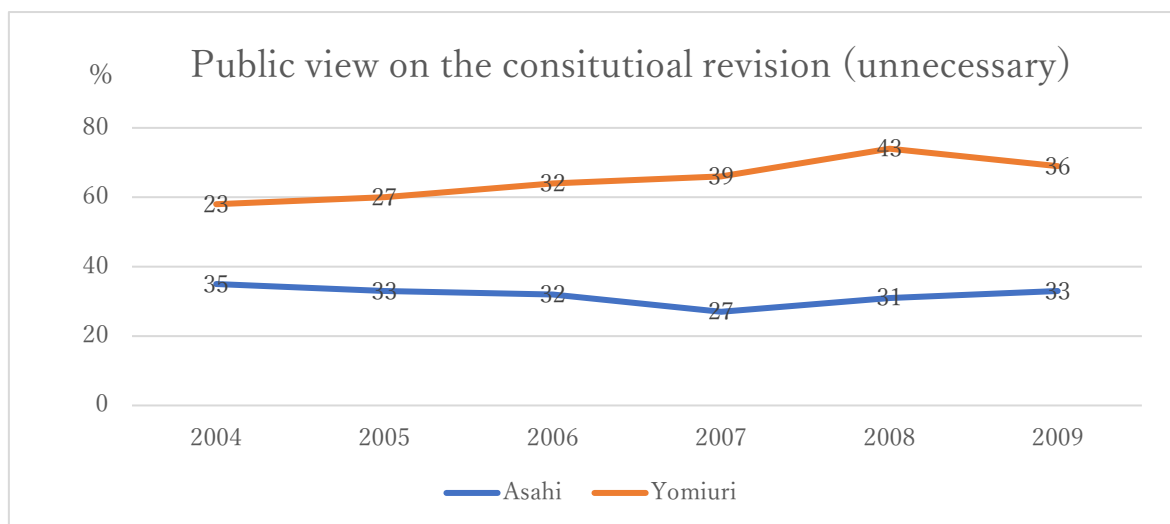


Figure 5.2 The Proportion of the Public Opposed to the Constitutional Revision

The overall public view on constitutional revision has been positive regardless of its progress (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2008a). There are simply more who support the revision than those who do not (see Figure 5.1 and 5.2). Nevertheless, Figure 5.1 and Table 5.2 suggest there is not much of a relationship between the Cabinet support rate and the public support rate for constitutional revision. In other words, the public view on the constitution does not seem to play a direct role in preventing the Cabinet from pursuing the constitutional revision. However, this concurrently suggests that leading the discussion of the constitutional revision is nowhere near a valid policy initiative to gain public support, if not lose it. This explains the leaders' dilemma between strategic needs

and political legitimacy. Leaders are quiet about constitutional revision during an election because of other more appealing focal points to gain public support, not necessarily because of the taboos of constitutional revision.

Table 5.3 The Highest and Lowest Cabinet Support Rates of Prime Ministers Between 2004 and 2009 (FactoBox, 2016)

Prime minister	Period	Highest Cabinet support	Lowest Cabinet support
Koizumi	2004–2006	56% (May 2004)	40% (February 2005)
Abe	2006–2007	70% (September 2006)	24% (August 2007)
Fukuda	2007–2008	56% (September 2007)	18% (May 2008)
Aso	2008–2009	50% (September 2008)	17% (June 2009)

However, the revision of Article 9 and CSD remains unpopular amongst the public. For Asahi's survey, amongst those who favour constitutional revision, only 7–9% believe the revision of Article 9 is the prime reason to support the revision during the period between 2004 and 2009 (Asahi Shimbun, 2004f, 2005c, 2008, 2009i). On the other hand, Yomiuri's poll suggested the preference on the way to allow CSD was roughly divided equally; (1) 30% CSD through the reinterpretation, (2) CSD through the revision and (3) no allowance of CSD in any way (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2004b, 2005a, 2006, 2007e, 2008a, 2009b). Thus, it is difficult to argue that the attempt of revising/reinterpreting the constitution is a trigger for the decline in the cabinet support rate and hence the three short-lived prime ministers. What hindered leaders from advancing the issue of the constitutional revision was their own political performance as the Cabinet. In this sense, the socially accepted norm of anti-militarism does not exert a direct influence on the outcome (the absence of materialisation of the revision/reinterpretation of CSD).

Similarly, social/economic groups did not exert any substantial influence on the constitutional revision despite their active endorsement. For instance, almost all major economic groups issued a proposal or similar kind to advocate constitutional revision and CSD. The most obvious case is Keidanren (2007), which issued a concrete policy proposal named after the president, *Mitarai Vision, Kibou no Kuni* ('A Country of Hope'). It constantly submitted requests to the Cabinet for the revision in 2004 (Asahi Shimbun, 2004h) and for CSD in 2005 (Asahi Shimbun, 2005n) and 2006 (Asahi Shimbun, 2006l). Likewise, Japan Association of Corporate Executives (Asahi Shimbun, 2006m), the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) (Asahi Shimbun, 2004j) and Keidanren constituted the three biggest economic groups in Japan, and they

individually issued a proposal-like document to argue the need for the constitutional revision to stipulate the role of the SDF. However, these are in line with the LDP's long-held goal, and it is needless to say that the LDP did not put these (or its) visions into practice. Thus it can be said that the influence of these groups was not substantial enough or these were not so crucial actor on this matter.

Arguably, Nippon Kaigi helped spread the view to support the constitutional revision. It has a prefectural branch all over Japan, holding a conference, meeting and public speech to promote the revision on national memorial days, such as National Foundation Day and Constitution Memorial Day, each year (Asahi Shimbun, 2004c, 2006g, 2007d, 2009a). However, anti-constitutional revision groups such as *9Jou no Kai* ('Article 9 Association') (9Jou no Kai, 2018) organised the same type of meetings for an opposite purpose. These active groups might have intensified the division further without so much change in the public view on CSD. Thus, the influence of these groups offset with each other or these were not so substantial.

Reflection on the Strategic Environment and Intervening Variables

The aggravating strategic environment with the role of the intervening variables resulted in a unique development in terms of CSD and constitutional revision. Due to the acute need to enhance external balancing with the US, Abe decided to address the prohibition of CSD through constitutional interpretation, which had been long been only possible through revision (Asahi Shimbun, 2007a). However, no significant material change was observed. The reason for the absence lies in domestic politics. The LDP's support rate since Koizumi plummeted in every administration, caused the victory of the DPJ through the 2007 election and the so-called twisted Diet (Shinoda, 2013). Through the political power competition, the LDP and the DPJ did not choose to co-operate despite their enthusiasm for CSD and the revision. Neither party could have a majority, not to mention a supermajority/bipartisan group, in both houses.

This institutional obstacle made leaders prioritise political legitimacy over strategic culture. Given the prime ministers such as Fukuda and Aso who endorsed CSD and revision, being deliberately quite over them during their premiership despite their relative enthusiasm, leaders' image matters in explaining the absence of progress: the triumph of political legitimacy over strategic culture. That constitutional revision was an openly discussed topic created a more difficult situation to achieve it. Every party saw it

as an opportunity to take the lead, thereby creating competition rather than co-operation. In particular, Article 9 remained the least popular amongst other agendas for revision (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2007a). The LDP, which considered the revision of Article 9 a long-held dream, had no options but to address an entire revision of the constitution as a disguise albeit not so effective. Therefore, in this period, the leaders' image and their action were largely responsible for Japan's response to the strategic environment through the case of CSD and constitutional revision.

Nevertheless, the enactment of the law concerning the procedure of the constitutional revision suggests that, institutionally, the Cabinet finally was able to submit the proposal of the revision after the three-year non-submission, no-planning period. Economic/social groups, however, would continue to have a minimal influence on the process of CSD and constitutional revision.

The following section focuses on the regime change and the DPJ and addresses the issue of CSD and the constitutional revision between 2009 and 2012.

5.3 Collective Self-Defence and the Constitutional Revision Between 2009 and 2012

The law concerning the procedure of the constitutional revision required a three-year inactive period of planning the idea or details of the potential revision, which was to finish in 2010. Thus, after 2010, Japan was, in theory, capable of pushing forward the constitutional revision under the newly emerged ruling party, the DPJ. In tandem with institutional readiness, the strategic environment surrounding Japan had become further aggravated with continuous assertiveness of North Korea and evermore growing China that overtook Japan's GDP in 2010. The environment kept sending signals for Japan to engage itself in balancing behaviours. However, Japan did not engage in balancing behaviours as it did not materialise any of such by pursuing either CSD through the interpretation of the constitution or the revision. In terms of Japan's security policy concerning its constitution, Japan failed to respond because of its domestic politics.

Three Cabinets in this period between 2009 and 2012 were not particularly pacifist-oriented in relation to security policy. Main leaders favoured CSD regardless of the means to materialise it. Each Cabinet constantly failed to maintain its political stability, however, to secure enough seats to pass the relevant legislation; therefore, this rendered any attempt pointless. A further difficulty lies not only in the loose unity of the

party in relation to the constitutional revision or reinterpretation but also its lack of experience and hence capacity to deal with domestic affairs. This chapter examines how the non-response of Japan to the changing strategic environment can be explained by the intervening variables.

Leaders' Image

Amongst the DPJ leaders, Hatoyama had a relatively vivid vision regarding Japan's security policy. He thought that one of the problems of the current constitution was based on his strategic vision of Japan's universal inability to use of force, which he believed was necessary for PKO missions (Hatoyama, 2005, p. 9). Hatoyama's strategic vision was arguably UN centrist and further aimed to create a UN-like community in East Asia based on the principle of international co-operation. To contribute more to PKOs, he advocated the amendment of the constitution to allow the use force at least for PKOs (Hatoyama, 2005, p. 18). Hatoyama produced his own constitution plan for the revision, published in 2005 as *Shin Kenpou Shian* (A Proposal for the New Constitution), with an idea to create a new military force that could be only operated under the UN (Hatoyama, 2005). Thus, compared with the conservative politicians in the LDP, such as Abe, Hatoyama's strategic vision was unique and yet progressive to the extent to which the SDF's capability should be practically enhanced.

On the other hand, Naoto Kan, who succeeded Hatoyama as prime minister, had a malleable view on the constitution and Japan's security policy. While he was a self-declared realist, his inauguration speech did not have much substance to it—at least theoretically—because he emphasised the importance of the US-Japan alliance and economic and cultural ties with Asia (Kan, 2010). As a member of the DPJ, which advocated the position of 'creation of the constitution (*souken*)', Kan was once a supporter of the constitutional revision to recognise the SDF as a military to justify and enlarge its contributions to PKO missions. This stance was likely to assume the idea of collective security that was prohibited constitutionally at the time (Hatoyama & Kan, 1997). Moreover, along with the idea of 'creation', Kan supported the unique idea of creating 'United Nations Standby Units' in addition to the SDF (DPJ, 2004). According to him, the Units are independent of the SDF and similar to an international civil servant like international volunteers. He argued that their dispatch in PKO missions was not unconstitutional. However, he revised these visions in light of Abe's attempt to revise the constitution and allow the CSD by stating that he opposed CSD and revision per se

(Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 2014). Leaders such as Kan, who lacked explicit views and objectives regarding Japan's security policy, are likely to prioritise 'political legitimacy' to maintain political stability.

The last DPJ prime minister was Yoshihiko Noda. Although he did not often publicly state his vision on Japan's security policy and the constitution, he had a moderate view of nationalism and normalisation. Like Koizumi, he advocated the justification of the visit to the Yasukuni Shrine where A-class war criminals are enshrined; the visit always causes international criticism, in particular from Japan's neighbouring countries (Asahi Shimbun, 2012j). Noda further argued the need to exercise CSD in relation to the territorially disputed areas against China. In his publication, 'Enemies for democracy' (*minshu no teki*), Noda, like Abe, mentioned the SDF should be recognised as the military domestically and internationally (Y. Noda, 2009).

However, his view seems personal not a vision or a goal as a politician. Noda neither publicly stated his views nor reflected them on Japan's security policy. As an interview of Naoki Minezaki, who once served as vice minister of finance when Noda was the minister of finance, revealed, Noda separated his personal ideology from 'national interests' (Yamaguchi & Nakakita, 2014). His malleable views could be seen further in his efforts to establish a new political party—the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan—in 2017 (Japan Times, 2017c). This is despite the fact that he was once advocating for CSD and the constitutional revision in the 2000s. This new party officially opposed CSD and the constitutional revision led by the LDP. In this way, Noda, along with Kan, seemed likely to prioritise political legitimacy over his strategic vision.

As discussed previously, the DPJ consists of politicians with a variety of ideologies and many previously belonged to different political parties, ranging from conservative parties, such as the LDP, to leftist parties, such as the Socialist Party. This inevitably results in inconsistencies related to the constitution. An Asahi survey in 2009 acutely reflected this background: while 44% of DPJ members favoured revision, 22% opposed it and 31% neither supported nor opposed it (Asahi Shimbun, 2009j). Examining the DPJ's coalition partners strengthens the diverse view on the revision. Its coalition partners, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the People's New Party (PNP), are not particularly keen on security policy (Japan Times, 2010). The SDP inherited the legacy of the past Socialist Party opposing Japan's active contribution and participation in

international security as well as constitutional revision. The PNP is a somewhat normalist party due to its pursuit of constitutional revision and independence from the US-Japan security alliance (Asahi Shimbun, 2005f). The PNP comprises the former LDP members dissatisfied by the Koizumi administration over the issue of postal service reform (Asahi Shimbun, 2005h). Despite its size—five politicians at the start—the view of PNP members is close to that of the LDP.

Domestic Institutions

At the time the DPJ became the ruling party, the coalition met the minimum requirement to pass a bill with 320 seats, meaning the coalition had two-thirds of the seats in the Lower House. However, the coalition did not have a similar presence in the Upper House, having slightly less than half the seats (Shinoda, 2013). This composition suggests it is institutionally possible to railroad a bill even the Upper House opposes it. Therefore, if the DPJ wanted to reinterpret the constitution to allow CSD, it would have been possible. On the other hand, in relation to constitutional revision, because of the requirement to have two-thirds of seats in both houses, unless forming a supermajority or a bipartisan group, the ruling coalition would not have enough seats to proceed the constitutional revision.

That said, the coalition could have allowed a progression of the constitutional revision because three years had passed since the law concerning the constitutional revision procedure. As discussed, the law, enacted in 2007, requires three years, not allowing the discussion or planning of the constitutional revision. As planned, the Commission on the Constitution in each house was established in (Commission on the Constitution, 2007a) not only to investigate the current constitution for planning potential revisions but also to examine ideas of revisions to determine whether a bill should be submitted.

The Commission serves as a quasi-Legislative Bureau that is considered ‘the guardian of the constitution’ (Commission on the Constitution, 2007b). The Commission consists of 50 members from political parties but not bureaucrats; the number of members from each party is proportionate to each party’s seats in the house. When discussing any potential revision ideas, the Commission must hold an open hearing to which all members are invited. On the other hand, if the ruling party pursues CSD through constitutional reinterpretation, as examined in the previous chapter, the idea of reinterpretation must go through the CLB to maintain constitutionality.

In summary, the ruling DPJ coalition, at the time of starting the Cabinet, was able to proceed with the issue of CSD by revision or reinterpretation at least institutionally.

Hatoyama's Inability or the DPJ's Lack of Experience?

Despite its size, the DPJ did not seem to have much expertise on how to plan and implement policies. In particular, it has been somewhat traditional for the LDP and bureaucrats to go hand in hand to construct policies, while the DPJ considered it a corrupted custom and eradicated it by excluding bureaucrats from the policy-making process (Shinoda, 2013). This does not only mean there was inefficiency in making the most of political resources, but also the DPJ had to be responsible for virtually all policy-making on its own. Given the very diverse views on the constitution, the ruling coalition apparently considered passing an annual budget plan more of a priority than pursuing constitutional revision (Asahi Shimbun, 2009j). The Hatoyama administration seemed to have two means to address CSD: allowing CSD through constitutional reinterpretation as an immediate task or 'creating the constitution' to stipulate the roles of the SDF. Two months after the Cabinet started, Hirobumi Hirano, the chief Cabinet secretary, stated that the administration did not see the absolute need to abide by past constitutional interpretation made by past LDP administrations (Asahi Shimbun, 2009f).

Hatoyama himself did not hide his intention to revise the constitution. When he appeared on a radio programme, he showed his strategy to address the constitutional revision by focusing on the part in relation to decentralization, following the party's principle of 'people's politics'. Depending on how the discussion evolved, he then intended to move on to addressing Article 9 (Asahi Shimbun, 2009e). These statements notwithstanding, this strategy was not attempted. In reality, no activity was seen in the Commission on the Constitution in either house. Moreover, members of the Commissions were yet to be submitted and selected at the time.

In the meantime, the LDP descended for the first time to the position of an opposition party, seeking an effective means to influence policy-making and looking for an opportunity to show its suitability as the ruling party by acting as a shadow Cabinet. The LDP unilaterally organised a meeting, promoted the constitutional revision and issued a summary of main points of the constitution (*ronten seiri*), which not only included Article 9 but also extensively covered areas such as the emperor and the right of

foreigners residing in Japan (Asahi Shimbun, 2010q). Given Hatoyama's attempt to relocate the US military base outside Japan under the name of 'equal partner to the US', the LDP distinguished itself from the DPJ by appealing for a 'truly equal partner[ship] with the US with the party's intention to allow CSD to strengthen the alliance (Asahi Shimbun, 2010k). While the DPJ was stuck in implementing policies, the LDP saw a favourable opportunity to push for their policy ideas.

For the LDP, the situation could not be ignored. Proceeding with the constitutional revision as an opposition party helped avoid criticism because all eyes were on the DPJ, even though the topic itself was not particularly popular. This made it easier to discuss once-considered taboo subjects. Furthermore, making progress on the issue of the constitution and appealing to the public served to undermine the DPJ's reputation as the ruling party by creating the image of a 'sluggish party'. The image was soon dubbed *kimerarenai seiji* ('politics in which nothing can be decided') (Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 2012c).

Hajime Nakatani, the director of the division promoting the constitutional revision, stated that each plan for constitutional revision should be submitted one by one when agreed within the LDP. One plan critically reflected the LDP's intention: the revision of Article 96 for further revision such as Article 9. That is, the LDP intended to lower the minimum requirement to submit the constitutional revision as a bill from two-thirds to one-half of the seats in both houses (Asahi Shimbun, 2010l). Lowering the hurdle for the revision made it far easier to revise the unpopular parts of the revision, such as Article 9. Given the LDP's active involvement in the constitutional revision, when each party issued a statement on the constitutional revision on Constitution Memorial Day (3 May), the DPJ, instead of the ambitious slogan of 'creating the constitution', leaned towards the LDP that aimed for the constitutional revision. The statement implies that the constitution should be added or revised if there are inadequacies or parts that need to be revised (Asahi Shimbun, 2010m).

Thus, within a year, the DPJ was put into a rather awkward position. While the largest opposition party actively pursued constitutional revision, which was one of the DPJ's objectives, the DPJ could not maintain two-thirds of seats in the Lower House without the SDP, which was dead set against the revision. Before it went any further, Hatoyama resigned due to his failure to fulfil his responsibility to reach an agreement on the issue of the relocation of the US military base in Okinawa.

The Kan Administration: Lost Opportunities and Unfortunate Disaster

The Kan administration faced a difficult restart as the ruling party. When Hatoyama ceased his ambitious relocation plan and compromised by following the existing plan, which required unanimity amongst the Cabinet, the head of the SDP refused to accept. This resulted in her dismissal, and the SDP left the coalition. Any future attempt of the coalition to submit a bill could be institutionally blocked because the two-party coalition had less than two-thirds of the seats (Japan Times, 2010). Furthermore, the Cabinet was shuffled just two months before the general election, which worsened the DPJ's position. The DPJ failed to secure more than half of the seats in the Upper House election, keeping the 'twisted' Diet. Thus, the DPJ was unable to put forward CSD through constitutional reinterpretation or revision unless it formed a grand coalition with the LDP.

In the end, Kan was betrayed by his former coalition partner at the Diet over CSD. Mizuho Fukushima, the head of the SDP at the Diet, persistently asked Kan about the new administration's stance on CSD because the Hatoyama administration had implied the government should not be confined by the previous interpretation of CSD. Kan was forced to admit that the current administration did not consider allowing CSD (House of Councilors, 2010). Although having the SDP as a coalition partner is no mean feat, having it as an enemy shackled the DPJ.

Furthermore, the Kan administration faced a substantial difficulty within a year: the great earthquake—known as '3.11'—took precedence over every political issue. Although 3.11 led Kan to consider forming a grand coalition with the LDP for a swift response to the disaster, the LDP rejected the offer (Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 2011). Nevertheless, since the enactment of the law concerning the procedure of the constitutional revision, it took four years to put the regulations of the Commission on the Constitution into practice in May 2011. The regulations dictate the number of Commission members, the minimum requirement to make a decision, and so on. Due to the emergent need to address the subsequent problems arising from 3.11, Yuichiro Haneda, the chair of the Diet Affairs Committee, stated at a press conference that members of the Commission were not to be chosen, and no further discussions of the constitutional revision would occur until there was some level of political stability (Asahi Shimbun, 2011b). Arguably minimal progress—determining how the Commission works—was made under the Kan administration.

There is also another reason the DPJ hesitated to pursue the constitutional revision, even though the largest opposition party favoured it. In the past, the DPJ rejected the LDP's attempt to enact the law concerning the procedure of the revision (Asahi Shimbun, 2004s). Since then, the DPJ changed its stance from pro-constitutional revision to anti-LDP-led revision. Thus, the fact that the DPJ follows what the LDP tried to proceed regarding the revision is self-contradictory (Asahi Shimbun, 2011d).

Too Late to Act? The DPJ: Towards a LDP-like Party Under the Noda Administration

As described previously, Noda personally held a normalist view on Japan's security policy; he believed Japan should be allowed to exercise CSD and the constitutional revision should recognize the SDF as the military. With his view and the DPJ's gradual compromise with the LDP, the Noda administration largely shifted its party stance to engage in these issues (Asahi Shimbun, 2012g). This reignited debate over the constitution and CSD amongst political parties. Although the Noda administration lasted just a year, the period may have laid foundations for the succeeding administration to emphasise the agendas.

Within a month of Noda's inauguration, the DPJ finally submitted the members of the Commission on the Constitution. Azuma Koshiishi, the secretary-general of the DPJ, publicly admitted the reason for the submission was largely due to the LDP pushing for debate on constitutional revision (Asahi Shimbun, 2011c). Given the twisted Diet where no party could single-handedly pass a bill, the DPJ concluded that it must compromise to some extent to receive support from the opposition parties. It ultimately took five years from the enactment of the law of the constitutional revision procedure to start the actual discussion of the revision. However, the DPJ still hesitated because it wanted to prioritise the recovery from 3.11 (Asahi Shimbun, 2011d).

Moreover, one small practical issue had to be addressed that remained unresolved: the regulation of the minimum age to vote in a national referendum. The law concerning national referendum, which was part of the law of the constitutional revision procedure, stipulated the minimum age to vote was 18; however, the minimum age to vote in a general election was 20 (Asahi Shimbun, 2011d). Thus, laws related to the minimum age for voting in a general election should have been revised but did not happen.

Because the DPJ itself forced the LDP to lower the minimum age with respect to national referendums in 2007, the DPJ must first address it as its own agenda (Asahi Shimbun, 2011d). The DPJ's attempt to revise the relevant laws ended up an abortive attempt.

Nevertheless, this did not necessarily directly relate to the discussions in the Commission on the Constitution. Thus, in November 2011, the first meeting at the Upper House was held during which each party stated its stance on the revision. Apart from the Communist Party and the SDP—two parties that are against the revision but held only a combined ten seats in the house—most of the parties had a positive attitude towards the revision (Asahi Shimbun, 2011e). Each party actively promoted its idea and fuelled the discussion.

For instance, the LDP—utilising its own constitutional revision plan implemented in 2005—issued a revised version of the plan, which reflected its stance recognising the SDF as the military and self-defence, including CSD (Asahi Shimbun, 2012d). The newly established Osaka Restoration Party, whose membership included Toru Hashimoto, a famous celebrity in Japan, and other former LDP members, also advocated for constitutional revision with a focus on revising Article 9 (Asahi Shimbun, 2012c). Small parties, such as the Your Party and the Sunrise Party of Japan, advocated revision with similar views on Article 9 (Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 2012b). While these parties proposed specific plans to revise the constitution, the DPJ had yet to come to any conclusion and only issued a summary of points for discussion as to how to deal with the SDF and the right of self-defence in the revision (Asahi Shimbun, 2012f). It seems the DPJ was the only party that could not determine its position.

At this point, the opposition parties were more active than the ruling coalition as the objective of the LDP was to prepare for the next election for taking over the position of the ruling party. This aim was particularly conspicuous for the LDP, which actively sought to form bipartisan/non-partisan groups in preparation for future co-operation on the revision. The LDP presidential election was imminent. Thus, Abe, who aimed to run for the election, emphatically acted through secret meetings to promote the idea to co-operate with the Osaka Restoration Party (Asahi Shimbun, 2012a).

The reason for this early preparation for the election, which was to be held in 2013, resided in a pact between the DPJ and the LDP with the Komeito. When it came to a tax

increase bill submitted by the DPJ, which was also in line with the LDP's stance, the DPJ and the LDP made a pact: in return for endorsing the DPJ bill, the DPJ agreed to LDP's request to dissolve the Diet in 2012. Therefore, the LDP had a chance to make a comeback, while the DPJ was cornered as the motion of non-confidence was submitted (Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 2012a). Therefore, the LDP prepared not only for the election but also for a swift start as the new ruling party post-election.

While the DPJ was on the verge of collapse, it successively compromised and gave away its policy initiatives to the LDP, even those regarding CSD. Despite being hesitant towards CSD at the time of inauguration, Noda stated to welcome the active debate of CSD (Asahi Shimbun, 2012j). In the meantime, the LDP already moved on to drafting relevant bills to allow CSD through constitutional reinterpretation for a swift submission when it took over the DPJ after the election (Asahi Shimbun, 2012g). The DPJ's inability to decide and increasing propensity to follow the LDP was well pointed out. Hatoyama evaluated that the Noda administration was no different from the LDP (Asahi Shimbun, 2012i). In the end, as following the promise, Noda dissolved the Diet at the end of 2012, achieving nothing notable with no conceivable progress on both the revision and CSD by letting the LDP win the election.

State-society relations: outstanding absence

State-society relations refers to the cohesion between the government and societal/economic groups. In this period, first, because nothing was even attempted to materialise in the form of a law or bill where the public may exert substantial influence over policy-making, the public, as part of this variable, was largely absent in a direct way. Nevertheless, it was the public that judged the DPJ as incapable of handling not only security policy but also domestic policies, which resulted in the resurgence of the LDP. Arguably, the Japanese public might be more sensitive and responsive towards *seiken uneinouryoku* ('administration capability'). For instance, Hatoyama resigned largely because he failed to fulfil his promise to relocate the Futenma air base outside Okinawa (Shinoda, 2013). However, up to then, the issue itself had been the main political objective in Okinawa, not particularly receiving national public attention. The LDP took ten years to finalise the relocation plan, during which the sluggish process of determining relocation plan was not the target of criticism. The same can be said of the Kan administration, which collapsed due to its alleged inability to respond to the natural disaster and nuclear meltdown. However, it is questionable that the LDP would have

made a substantial difference provided that the ruling party had been the LDP. As Samuels (2013) argues, at the point where two years had passed since the disaster, the overall political dynamics, structure and policies remained largely status quo.

The point is that the Japanese public shows a propensity to make a rushed evaluation and judgement, which here resulted in a number of very short-lived administrations and made it extremely difficult to have a consistent and constructive discussion of constitutional revision in the long run. This is particularly because, be it regime change or change in the prime minister, the newly elected prime minister is somewhat expected to be ‘different’ from the predecessors (Kitaoka, 2008), which is acutely seen in the three administrations in this period. Albeit indirectly, this public tendency has created tradition of politicians to prioritise political legitimacy over realising strategic needs. This is indirectly incorporated by the leaders’ dilemma to maintain public support and not only security policy. The public defined in the variable was a direct response to a particular security policy initiative. The inability of leaders to establish stability was a key feature. And yet, the chapter shows the public has been concerned not necessarily with radical remilitarisation but *seiken-unyo nouryoku* (‘administration capability’) with a few scandals, corruption and smooth implementation of policy since the mid-2000s. The same applies to the three short-lived LDP prime ministers in the previous period.

Societal/economic groups also were insignificant. As with the previous period, the grassroots movement was both anti- and pro-constitutional revision, and both sides engaged in organizing a meeting, particularly on Constitution Memorial Day (Asahi Shimbun, 2011a). If anything, Nippon Kaigi, the largest organization to promote constitutional revision, accelerated its activities. Their meeting started online live streaming in 2009, so people all over Japan can watch and see famous celebrities or intellectuals talk (Tawara, 2016). However, among the members of Nippon Kaigi, of which 252 are elected politicians in the Diet as of 2013, almost all belong to the LDP (Chuo Nippou, 2013). There is not a strong linkage between Nippon Kaigi and the DPJ. Reported members from the DPJ are Seiji Maehara (a notable hawkish politician) and Satoshi Morimoto, (the former defence minister in the Noda administration and a retired SDF member) (Shiomi, 2016). It is thus hard to speculate that Nippon Kaigi exerted substantial influence over policy-making on the constitution, all the more so given no progress materialised during the DPJ era.

Similarly, Keidanren was rather quiet because it has strong ties with the LDP. The DPJ

suggested different economic and industrial policies from what Keidanren wanted, which often coincided with those of the LDP. In the previous period, Keidanren repeatedly lobbied the LDP to push for constitutional revision and CSD, which was not seen in this period. Furthermore, even before the LDP won the election, at the LDP party convention, the president of Keidanren appeared and showed his support for the LDP (Asahi Shimbun, 2012k). Thus, there was no particular influence or connection with the DPJ administrations.

The Reflection of the Strategic Environment and the Intervening Variables

In the end, no progress was made under the Noda administration, despite the aggravating strategic environment. As Noda had agreed, the Diet was dissolved in December 2012 and the LDP achieved a landslide victory while the DPJ lost more than 173 seats and secured only 57. Also striking was the emergence of the Osaka Restoration Party, which secured 54 seats, the second-largest opposition party after the DPJ (Asahi Shimbun, 2012b). The LDP, the Osaka Restoration Party, the Komeito and the Your Party more or less favoured revision and won 397 seats out of 480. Given 40% of the DPJ agreed with the revision, approximately 420 members could be categorised as pro-constitutional revision. Now that the ruling party was the LDP, the largest advocate of the revision, the situation is a largely favourable one for those who aim to revise the constitution.

Japan again did not particularly respond to the strategic environment by either extending the current constitutional reinterpretation or the revision to allow CSD for external balancing. Virtually no substantive material change was seen. The absence of a response was largely due to the domestic political chaos and political game for power competition. The first administration under Hatoyama was busy adjusting to the position of a ruling party. The Kan administration faced 3.11. The Noda administration seemed to be ready to address issues of CSD and revision, although it already had lost popularity amongst the public, which could not be restored. Therefore, leaders' image and subsequent behaviours led by individual image accounted for the absence of any substantive change.

Domestic institutions, such as the constitution and CSD, by definition, remained intact, while state-society relations did not play a particular role in this period. Political stability is key in terms of CSD, without which the DPJ was unable to even act towards

CSD. Compared with the previous period, despite the further aggravating strategic environment, the level of progress regarding CSD was far less.

Overall, this section gives an account of the absence of Japan's balancing behaviour from the perspective of the constitution using the intervening variables and comparing relative importance as an explanatory variable. The next section focuses on the period between 2012 and 2018, where a different level (far more drastic) of progress is seen. It explains how the constitutional revision debate took place in the proceeding years with the strategic environment becoming more aggravated.

5.4 Collective Self-Defence and Constitutional Revision Between 2012 and 2018

The analysis in this period examines the two continued parallel initiatives regarding the constitution: the constitutional reinterpretation to allow CSD and the constitutional revision with a particular focus on Article 9. During the period between 2012 and 2018, the strategic environment saw an aggravating change with the further rise of China and increased imminence of North Korea as a threat. Officially North Korea started signalling to Japan as a potential target of its missiles; this tension was intensified by the election of a new US president, Trump, who showed an intention to engage in a direct military confrontation with nuclear weapons (Shiva, 2018). Japan could only increase its external balancing through the allowance of the CSD. Japan was incapable of materialising the revision of Article 9. Depending on how it is revised, the revision would potentially enable Japan to engage in first-strike, possess offensive military weapons and form an alliance with neighbouring countries other than the US. This would theoretically help Japan make a substantial commitment to internal balancing. And yet, the probability of revising the constitution became more and more realistic as the ruling coalition secured two-thirds of seats in both houses with the several opposition parties, supporting the coalition (Asahi Shimbun, 2016d). This section explains the intervening variables and how, why and which ones are responsible for the partial response of Japan to the strategic environment, namely, the increase in external balancing and the absence of internal balancing allowed by the constitution.

Explanation of the Intervening Variables

Leaders' image

As discussed, CSD was first attempted by the Abe administration as a policy initiative in 2007 when he organised his private advisory board of academics and influential individuals to suggest the need for CSD. Abe's strategic vision has not changed since then. Immediately after his re-inauguration as prime minister in 2012, he again stated the same revisionist stance by rearticulating his aim to revise the constitution and allow CSD (Asahi Shimbun, 2012h). Similar views on the constitution and CSD are shared not only amongst the LDP's Cabinet members, such as Taro Aso (vice prime minister), Itsunori Onodera (minister of defence) (Akahata Shimbun, 2013), but also within the LDP. An Asahi survey suggests that 89% of the politicians elected through the Lower House general election in 2012 favour constitutional revision, while 79% leans towards the allowance of CSD (Asahi Shimbun, 2013b). The data, in fact, are reflected in the newly emerged parties—the Japan Restoration Party (55 seats) and the Your Party (18 seats) (Sankei Shimbun, 2014)—which advocate the need for revision and CSD. These two parties arguably have a more normalist view than the LDP, as they both suggest an autonomous security policy.

The Komeito has not changed its stance of pacifism despite the long position of its coalition partner, the LDP, to allow many changes in Japan's security policy. In particular, the president of the Komeito, Natsuo Yamaguchi, publicly states the party's position of strong hesitation towards both the revision and CSD, institutionally making it a potential veto player (Asahi Shimbun, 2013g).

Domestic institutions

As examined throughout the case study, the variable of domestic institutions refers to the domestic policy-making framework for actors which are delineated by both the constitution and regulations. Another aspect of it is institutional practice in the policy-making process. In this case study, the policymaking framework refers to the constitutional interpretation and the constitution that serves as the core of the variable, and it involves regulations, such as how the constitutional reinterpretation could be revised (i.e. two-thirds of seats in the Diet) or the revision (the same condition with a national referendum) (Neary, 2002). This section also considers 'elections' a key aspect

in relation to explaining leaders' dilemma between strategic needs and maintenance of political stability because winning the elections are prerequisite conditions (Catalinac, 2016). This period between 2012 and 2018, the number of elections is exceedingly high for one administration (three Lower House elections, two Upper House elections, three Tokyo gubernatorial elections and one Japanese unified local election) .

In comparison, for the last six administrations (Abe, Fukuda, Aso, Hatoyama, Kan and Noda), each had at most two elections, the result of which often has been the resignation of the prime minister. In the previous two periods, the election shows that attempt of revising/reinterpreting the constitution at least is not an ideal way to win the election. Most importantly, the elections provide us with a key to examining the disparity between the unpopularity of the revision of Article 9 and CSD and the long-lasting Abe administration with its popularly known objectives to achieve both.

State-society relations

State-society relations as an intervening variable look at the interaction among the government, the public and relevant economic/societal groups. As the agenda of constitutional revision requires a national referendum and CSD, as well as the substantial popularity of the ruling party, the relative weight of state-society relations—particularly the public and societal groups—that are for/against these might be increased. Notably, Nippon Kaigi—one of the largest nationalistic organisations in Japan to which many politicians, including Abe, belong—has expanded and enlarged its activities to promote the idea of constitutional revision and CSD.

Domestic Institutions vs Leaders: Towards the Constitutional Reinterpretation to Allow Collective Self-Defence

Until 2012, despite the growing appearance of the debate regarding CSD, nothing had been attempted to implement the constitutional reinterpretation. At most, the research was conducted to investigate as to whether CSD could/should be allowed in the past administration, including Abe's first Cabinet. It was right after the 2012 general election that Abe tried to contact Tsuneyuki Yamamoto, the director-general of the CLB, which is primarily responsible for checking any drafts of law and their constitutionality (Asahi Shimbun Seijibu, 2015). Abe also immediately reconvened his private advisory body for the first time in five years.

This is when the direct confrontation between domestic institutions and leaders' image can be seen as the intervening variables. The CLB's institutional practice for maintaining the constitutionality is such that it is dubbed as *ho no bannin* ('the guardian of the constitution') (Sakata & Kawaguchi, 2014). Thus, pacifism is institutionalised into the practice of the CLB.

Yamamoto answered Abe's question—whether the constitution could be reinterpreted to allow CSD—as constitutionally impossible (Asahi Shimbun Seijibu, 2015). The hurdle was substantial even if the coalition party had two-thirds of seats in both houses, which was institutionally enough to railroad any policy initiative. Therefore, the coalition party could not exercise such institutional power as long as the CLB said 'no'. Further contact was made with Yamamoto before the 2013 Upper House election, though it was in vain given the same answer for the impossibility of CSD (Asahi Shimbun Seijibu, 2015).

The CLB did not just say no, however, but proposed an alternative to meet Abe's objective, which revealed Abe's strong interests in CSD per se. His advisory board issued broad four scenarios where CSD should be allowed: (1) defence of US vessels on the high seas, (2) interception of a ballistic missile that might be on its way to the US, (3) participation in UN PKOs and other international peace operations and (4) logistics support for the operations of other countries participating in the same UN PKOs and other activities (Cabinet Office, 2008a). Yamamoto, as the representative of the CLB, offered that three of the four scenarios (excluding the second) were possible through the reinterpretation of the constitution by stretching the implications of the individual right of self-defence without allowance of CSD (Asahi Shimbun Seijibu, 2015). However, Abe (2006) saw CSD as a symbolic constraint on Japan's departure from 'the post-war regime'. Accordingly, Abe rejected Yamamoto's offer.

Authority over institutional practice

There is some inconsistency between institutional practice and regulation, both of which fall within the variable of domestic institutions, that stems from the superiority of the prime minister as regulated by law. Article 2 (The law of the establishment of the CLB) stipulates that the director-general of the CLB is appointed by the Cabinet (Cabinet Legislative Bureau, 1952). As a regulation, the prime minister has the authority to supervise the Cabinet and to appoint Cabinet members and the heads of the relevant

bureaus, including CLB, according to the law of the establishment of the Cabinet (Cabinet, 1952). However, conventionally the CLB has adopted the institutionalised practice of *yon shou sekinin taisei* ('four ministerial rotation system') to appoint the director-general amongst the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. The purpose is to avoid the influence of the prime minister to appoint since its establishment in 1952 (Makihara, 2018). Thus, although the Prime Minister has the right to appoint the personnel, up until 2012, he only signed the prior-arranged appointment by the rotation system. This tradition is due in part to the name of the guardian of the law given to the CLB.

Although the breaking of the tradition seems to give an impression of political interruption, Abe exercised his authority to replace Yamamoto with Ichiro Komatsu from the MOFA after the 2013 general election (Asahi Shimbun, 2013f). As a disguise, Yamaguchi was not simply dismissed but transferred to the Supreme Court as a judge. Nevertheless, given the abnormal attempt to exercise the authority to interfere with personnel transfer in the CLB, it would be obvious to see Abe's intention to railroad his plan to allow CSD. Komatsu did not have any experience working in the CLB and was involved in Abe's private advisory panel in 2007 to draft plans for CSD, which was suggestive of his agreement with the idea of CSD through constitutional reinterpretation (Asahi Shimbun Seijibu, 2015).

However, this does not mean the CLB became blindly obliged to follow whatever the Cabinet orders. It simply made it easier for both CLB and the Cabinet to reach an agreement with Komatsu who is not against CSD to bridge the gap between the two. The negotiation between Komatsu and Yusuke Yokohata, the deputy director-general of the CLB who was on path to become director-general, revealed that the CLB could not possibly be tolerated in any way because CSD has little to do with individual self-defence (Asahi Shimbun, 2013l). In other words, in the eyes of the CLB, it is impossible to reinterpret the constitution in a way that Japan can participate in any conflict or war that has no geopolitical risks to Japan just for the sake of protecting other countries.

Given that both Komatsu and Yokohata are lawyers, and Komatsu was critically aware of Abe's strong desire to allow CSD, they agreed to propose the idea of *gentei younin* ('limited acknowledgement') of CSD. The name itself is CSD, which is a stretched

interpretation of individual self-defence to the extent to which an attack or conflict in another region may pose a future danger to Japan. This arguably meets the conditions of the exercise of individual self-defence: (1) the existence of an imminent act of aggression, (2) there are no appropriate means to repel it and (3) a minimum degree of the use of force (Cabinet, 2008a) This is because the first two conditions are very 'subjective' and vary depending on the Cabinet. Furthermore, given the US military presence in Japan and its critical role in the US-Japan alliance, the logic of this stretch of the interpretation of self-defence is that an attack on the US military bases in Japan substantially weakens the alliance and imposes a direct threat on Japan. This is how the long-lasting institutional practice came to an end through the exercise of the authority of the Cabinet to overcome arguably the biggest and immediate hurdle, thus paving the way for CSD.

Resource extraction and planning

Consideration and priority were given to the Upper House election in July 2013 where the LDP finally gained full status as a ruling party and gained more than half of the seats with the Komeito. During the run-up to the election, the LDP did not take any particular action, and even Abe's private advisory board, which is designed to push CSD, stopped its activity (Asahi Shimbun, 2013d). The board restarted its meetings soon after the election almost every month before the coalition negotiation started (October 2013, November 2013, December 2013 and February 2014, after which the negotiation started to put forward the final plan of the board; (Cabinet Office, 2008b). Following the election and the replacement of Yamamoto, the Cabinet and the members of the board began to gain public acceptance through public statement, interviews and media appearances. In doing so, with the co-operation of the CLB, they aimed not only to promote CSD but also to plan 'detailed scenarios' that served to convince the Komeito with its pacifist ideology.

Komatsu reiterated the superiority of the Cabinet over the CLB regarding the constitutional interpretation, even for CSD (Asahi Shimbun, 2013l). The chair of the board, Shinichi Kitaoka, attempted to securitise the strategic environment and re-promote the four scenarios of CSD through Asahi Shimbun's interview (Asahi Shimbun, 2013r). Each meeting of the advisory board organised a press conference to answer questions from journalists to clarify the need for CSD (Cabinet Office, 2008b). Abe also pointed his focus outside Japan by organising four lectures and speeches in the

US and Canada (Asahi Shimbun, 2013a), while Onodera, the minister of defence, visited Thailand and met with the president to ask for understanding of allowing CSD (Asahi Shimbun, 2013m). On the other hand, Onodera also gave a speech at the UN general assembly to promote CSD through future participation in PKOs (Asahi Shimbun, 2013n). Through the investment of resources, the relevant actors promoted CSD until the end of 2013.

The Cabinet then planned the best strategy to proceed with CSD after the annual budget plan of the government passed through the Diet in April 2014. Although the budget plan can be institutionally passed with the seats of the ruling coalition with ease, there is a symbolic significance of the process. The Diet debate about the budget is not necessarily about the budget. Due to the public attention and media coverage, opposition parties often take the opportunity to appeal to the inability of the ruling party (Agora, 2016). If the finalised CSD plan was submitted before the budget plan was passed, it would be an effective way to frame CSD to the public as a ‘war bill’. Thus Abe stated that he planned to proceed with the discussion and start negotiations with the Komeito when the private advisory board submitted a final report in April—after the budget plan was to be passed—to avoid making CSD a focal point of discussion in the Diet (Asahi Shimbun, 2014f).

Coalition Politics: The Ideological Clash of Two Leaders’ Images

Although the Komeito was publicly opposed to CSD and raised concerns through media interviews (Asahi Shimbun, 2013o), public speeches (Asahi Shimbun, 2013p) and appearances on TV (Asahi Shimbun, 2013q), the two parties did not have an official party meeting until the budget plan was passed in March. Finally, a month before the advisory board issued a final report, the two parties started negotiations that lasted more than two months with some progress and compromise from the LDP’s view. Secretly, the two parties organised a meeting with Masahiko Koumura (vice president), Shigeru Ishiba and Gen Nakatani (former minister of defence) from the LDP and Natsuo Yamaguchi, Yoshihisa Inoue (secretary-general), and Yuichi Kitagawa (vice president) from the Komeito (Asahi Shimbun Seijibu, 2015). While the LDP contended that CSD was allowed under international law, which is not explicitly denied by Article 9, the Komeito maintained that CSD is only possible through constitutional revision, thus making the chasm clearer. However, the media discovered the secret meeting and reported that the LDP and the Komeito started the ruling coalition negotiation towards

the Cabinet decision of CSD (Asahi Shimbun, 2014d). As nothing was decided nor agreed, it may show a wrong signal to both LDP members, and in particular Komeito's supporters, most of whom belong to the pacifist *Soka-gakkai*. To be fair, the argument of both parties is correct because there is a number of interpretations of CSD, the right of individual self-defence and the overarching right of self-defence. For instance, the Komeito's view is based on the 1981 interpretation under the Suzuki administration that CSD refers to the use of force that occurs to a close ally and Article 9 prohibits it (House of Representatives, 1981). On the other hand, the LDP used the logic of the Ashida amendment that interpreted Article 9 as for the sole purpose of aspiring an international peace based on justice and order, under which the right of self-defence—arguably including CSD—is allowed (Asahi Shimbun, 2018c).

The secret meeting halted soon, and a smaller scale negotiation began secretly between Kitagawa and Koumura to look for a way to reach a settlement (Asahi Shimbun Seijibu, 2015). Having failed to convince the Komeito with the Ashida amendment, Koumura first needed another reason that convinced the LDP members. Thus, he organised a study group with different reasoning to allow CSD based on the Supreme Court judgment in the *Sunagawa* case. The protesters trespassing the restricted US military bases in the town of Sunagawa was charged with the violation of the special criminal act upon the treaty of mutual co-operation and security between Japan and the US (Oppler, 1961). It went on to a trial at the Supreme Court. However, the focal point of the trial was based on the first trivial verdict that they were not guilty because the presence of the US bases themselves is 'unconstitutional' and constituted 'war potential', prohibited by the constitution, acquitting the protesters. This was appealed to the Supreme Court, which decided to convict the protesters based on the ruling that the constitution did not deny the right of self-defence and therefore the US presence for the sake of Japan's defence was not unconstitutional.

Like other proponents, Koumura picked up the part of the judgment referring to the right of self-defence, suggestive of both individual and CSD to show the superiority of the Supreme Court over the CLB and justification regarding CSD (Asahi Shimbun Seijibu, 2015). Both Kitagawa and Koumura at least agreed that the judgment neither admitted nor denied CSD, and they also understood there should be some further push as what the Komeito sought is *hadome* ('brake') on CSD. In other words, while the Komeito did not deny the role of PKOs and any such activities to maintain peace, it was against participation in wars and conflicts, both of which can be possible under CSD.

With that basis established through the secret meeting, the coalition party negotiation started with the involvement of the CLB, which has been responsible for drafting all the Cabinet statement of the change in the interpretation of Article 9 (Asahi Shimbun Seijibu, 2015). There is still a difference in stance between the Komeito and the LDP. While the LDP put forward scenarios, now extending to 15 detailed cases from 4, the Komeito counter-argued that many of LDP-proposed scenarios to allow CSD can deal with the current interpretation of individual self-defence.

It has been clear that the term CSD has a substantial symbolic significance for both. To the Komeito, the term suggested the departure from pacifism (Sakata, 2016). For the LDP, the allowance of CSD is the long-desired aim in any form. With the co-operation of the CLB, this time Kitagawa passionately sought a settlement by examining every interpretation issued in the past. He found the Cabinet statement on CSD issued in 1972 convenient and convincing as it had aspects of *hadome* (break). It read that the right of self-defence was not denied by the constitution because Article 13 prioritises the Japanese people's right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and in case the right was fundamentally threatened, Japan could exercise the right of self-defence, albeit not admitting to an unlimited extent (Asahi Shimbun Seijibu, 2015). With Article 13, Kitagawa thought that by adding the explanation that due to the change in the security environment where an attack on other countries might lead to the fundamental overturn of the constitutional right, the limited degree of CSD can be convincing to both parties. Ultimately, this plan was adopted and the basis of the following Cabinet decision issued on 1 July 2014.

Endurance from the relentless and powerless opposition parties

The Cabinet statement on CSD did not automatically allow Japan to exercise the right of CSD, which was just a statement of the constitutional reinterpretation. Based on it, the Cabinet had to submit relevant bills to institutionalise them into laws, which the opposition parties tried to stop. However, given the institutional strength of the ruling coalition (two-thirds of seats) in both houses, there was no way to discard the Cabinet statement unless there was a regime change through the general election.

In fact, the general election was held at the end of 2014 where the Cabinet tactically shifted the focal point of the election from CSD to the decision regarding the

postponement of a tax increase from 8% to 10% from 2015 to 2017. In the LDP's manifesto for the election, only one page was spared for security policy out of 27 pages, which furthermore focused on diplomacy and did not mention CSD at all (LDP, 2014). Despite the DPJ's efforts—it was the largest opposition party—to challenge CSD as a priority of its manifesto, the LDP again won the election, singlehandedly securing more than half of the seats (DPJ, 2014). Relentless and powerless attempts made by the opposition parties to change the Cabinet statement did not stop after the election, which was in vain. The time spent on the diet discussion where the opposition parties counter-argue the lack of necessity of CSD was the longest in the post-war Japanese politics in the area of security policy, amounting to 216 hours in both houses, followed by 193 hours spent on the PKO law in 1993 (Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 2015).

State-society relations: Self-contradictory public and non-influential societal groups

In the previous period under the DPJ, the acute decline of the Cabinet support rate, despite its deliberate attempts not to provoke any controversial security policies, was responsible for short-lived Cabinets. This resulted in an inevitable difficulty following the discussion of CSD, which took years to finalise. The assumption was that the facilitation of the issue of CSD would lead to a drop in public support. However, in this period, the way in which the public acted was somewhat the other way around. That is, while the public continued to be opposed CSD, the Cabinet support rate was comparatively higher than previous Cabinets throughout this period. Those who opposed CSD had been more than 50% since the second Abe Cabinet started in 2012 (Asahi Shimbun, 2014e). Even after the submission of the relevant bills to legalise CSD, more than half were against them, which in fact did not use the term CSD (Asahi Shimbun, 2015). On the other hand, the Cabinet support rate was constantly higher than 40%, which was above the disapproval rating (NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute, 2018).

The relationship between public opinion on CSD and the Cabinet support rate was in fact not so significant. Only the support rate in September 2015, when the laws to allow CSD were passed, marked the disapproval rate overtaking the support rate, which recovered within a month. This may reflect on the deliberately prolonged CSD proceeding by the Abe Cabinet, due to the elections, with the view of maintaining political stability. Therefore, the public did not play any substantial role in terms of CSD

debates and legalisation.

The societal groups such as Keidanren and Nippon Kaigi, both of which promoted and lobbied CSD to the government, did not play any particularly notable role primarily because the planning and negotiation took place among a small number of groups: the LDP, the Komeito and the CLB. There is no evidence of direct involvement of Keidanren and Nippon Kaigi. For Keidanren, although it has long waited for CSD, what all it could do was prepare for the expansion of the indigenous defence industry when CSD was allowed. Immediately after the passage of the bill to allow CSD, Keidanren issued a policy proposal for the defence industry, which referred to the mid-term plan upon the allowance of CSD (Keidanren, 2015). On the other hand, Nippon Kaigi was known to be engaged in a nationwide grassroots movement to promote the constitutional revision, which includes CSD. However, no apparent influence such as the boost of public support for CSD was seen, which may be offset by the anti-CSD/constitutional revision movement, such as *9jou wo mamoru kai* (the organisation to protect Article 9) (Tawara, 2016).

Constitutional revision: An attempt to lower the hurdle through the revision of Article 96

From this section, the analysis focuses on constitutional revision. In parallel with CSD, the Abe Cabinet began to take a step towards the revision of the pacifist constitution since 2012. Thus, Abe—whether it was his idea or suggested by others—decided to address the revision of Article 9 in a rather roundabout way by the revision of Article 96. Article 96 is about the procedure of the constitutional revision: ‘Amendments to this Constitution shall be initiated by the Diet, through a concurring vote of two-thirds of all its members’ (Cabinet, 1947b). Even before the general election in 2012, Abe stated that it is necessary to revise Article 96 to be revised first to revise the other articles (Asahi Shimbun, 2012b) as the hurdle of the revision with two-thirds of seats in both houses is simply too high (Asahi Shimbun, 2012e). Furthermore, he already established a bipartisan group as a caucus of the Diet regarding Article 96 during the DPJ, which served as the ruling party (Asahi Shimbun, 2014c). The idea is that lowering the hurdle of the constitutional revision to the half of all the Diet members not only makes it institutionally easier for the subsequent revision, such as Article 9 but also serves as the revision with the expectation that the symbolic hurdle of the 70- year intact constitution was to dwindle. However, lowering the hurdle was not well supported, even by the

voters for the LDP: 41% of LDP voters opposed it whilst 54% of the public also opposed it (Asahi Shimbun, 2013i). Given the Komeito's hesitation, priority was given to the allowance of CSD by devoting political resources to it. In the end, any plan was not concretised and submitted to the Diet, and the discussion of revising Article 96 gradually faded whilst the discussion shifted to CSD.

Challenging the constitutional revision in a standard way: Leaders vs domestic institutions

In the end, it took a while to start the discussion of the constitutional revision until the bills related to CSD were put into practice on 29 March 2016 (Mainichi Shimbun, 2016), almost two years from the Cabinet decision to propose the constitutional reinterpretation. The opposition parties theoretically could attempt to scrap the bills until these took effect; in fact, five opposition parties submitted to do so, which was a failure due to their lack of seats (Japan Times, 2016).

Nevertheless, before finally embarking on the planning phase of the constitutional revision through the Commission on the Constitution in both houses, there was an immediate challenge: to secure more than two-thirds of seats in the Upper House through the upcoming general election on July 2016. While the coalition already had enough institutional power in the Lower House to initiate and submit the constitutional revision, it still needed the same proportion of seats in the Upper House. Because the coalition or the ruling party had never secured this level of influence through the Upper House election, Abe himself admitted it would be next to impossible for the ruling coalition to do so (Asahi Shimbun, 2016j). This inevitably led the coalition to seek parties to form a bipartisan group. As discussed before, there are two parties that leaned towards the constitutional revision: the Restoration Party and the Party for Japanese *Kokoro* (spirit), which was formed by former members of the Restoration Party. As one-half of the members of the Upper House are elected for every Upper House election, the four parties in total had already secured 84 seats, which meant at least 78 seats needed to be obtained through the election (Asahi Shimbun, 2016g).

While the LDP put constitutional revision into its manifesto for the upcoming election, albeit slightly touching on it amongst other promises, again the LDP did not attempt to make it a focal point for the election. Abe's campaign speech mentioned his economic policy, Abenomics, but not the revision (Asahi Shimbun, 2016f). On the other hand, the

opposition parties, such as the Democratic Progressive Party, explicitly showed the intention to prevent the revision throughout the election campaign (Asahi Shimbun, 2016d). As expected, the ruling coalition with the two parties secured two-thirds of the seats, thereby guaranteeing the institutional capability to submit a plan of constitutional revision at last (Asahi Shimbun, 2016i).

Discussion set in motion

Because the discussion and determination of the final plan of the revision are left to the Commission of the Constitution in both houses, which occurs during the Diet session, discussion of the detailed context of the revision started in September 2016. Although the LDP already issued the original draft of the revision, which stipulated the SDF as the military with the allowance of full-degree of CSD, the LDP decided not to use it as the basis of discussion due to the expected difficulty in getting a consensus (Asahi Shimbun, 2016c). Abe himself allegedly stated that his statement would confuse and delay the process; therefore, he did not intend to weigh in the discussion of the Commission (Asahi Shimbun, 2016c).

First, the Commission mainly started to address the overarching framework beyond constitutional revision, such as ‘constitutionalism’, the ways to judge unconstitutionality and the limitation of the constitution (House of Representatives, 2016). This is mainly because the constitution in light of Article 9, in particular, was neglected and interpretation of it played a crucial part in Japan’s security posture, which has been long considered a problem of the current constitution. The diet meeting for both Commissions occurred on a monthly basis; each session was devoted to a particular topic ranging from education to human rights. It, therefore, took a while to start debating Article 9. Be it deliberately or not, there was not a single session solely devoted to the discussion of Article 9, the right of self-defence or the SDF in 2016 and even 2017, while there was for local governance (House of Representatives, 2017b) and human rights (House of Representatives, 2017a).

Extension of the deadline for the revision

There seems to be a reason the LDP did not rush to revise the constitution while the ruling coalition had institutional momentum with two-thirds of the seats in both houses. This stemmed from the lowering support for the revision, which resulted in revising the

LDP regulation on presidency term limits. Until then, the president of the LDP—by definition, the prime minister when the LDP is the ruling party—could serve up to two consecutive terms (3 years per term).

Given the prolonged process, the LDP decided to extend the term limit to three terms and revised it in March 2017, which means Abe will serve as prime minister until 2021 (Sankei Shimbun, 2017c). While Abe stated that revising the constitution by 2018 during his term was the goal, after the change in the LDP's regulation, he set a new deadline of 2020 when the Tokyo Olympics will take place on Constitution Memorial Day in May (Asahi Shimbun, 2017m). He again advocated his plan of the revision of Article 9. At this point where the discussion of the revision of Article 9 saw no progress and strong opposition for a substantial revision on Article 9, Abe compromised on his original idea and proposed a plan in line with the Komeito: *kaken* (adding a clause to Article 9). That is to add a clause to stipulate the existence of the SDF as the military (ibid).

Reliance on the past-successful strategy

The relaxed deadline for the revision notwithstanding and given the lack of advancement on the revision of Article 9, Abe and like-minded policymakers again used the strategy to organise a small group to reach consensus with the Komeito. This tactic was used to enact laws to allow CSD, which included a secret negotiation between Koumura (the LDP) and Kitagawa (the Komeito), to plan a revision idea that satisfies both members (Asahi Shimbun, 2017h). The tactic was supposedly advocated by Abe (Asahi Shimbun, 2017f). This attempt largely ignores the critical role of the Commission on the Constitution, which is primarily responsible for the relevant discussion and planning. Furthermore, Abe gave the order to the LDP's committee to promote constitutional revision to hasten the pace to finalise the draft of the revision (Asahi Shimbun, 2017d).

At this point, Abe's initial revision plan was largely compromised, from the one to allow the full-degree of CSD with revision of the clauses of Article 9 to the non-revision of the clauses with the mere stipulation of SDF existence. While one can say that his goal is to achieve—be it material or symbolic—the revision itself, in accordance with the leaders' dilemma, it seems to him a necessary compromise to realise his strategic vision to avoid achieving nothing (Asahi Shimbun, 2016j). The LDP's drafts of the revision

issued in 2005 and 2012 both base the revision of Article 9 on changing the contexts of both clauses contained therein. In particular, the second clause refers to the unconstitutionality for Japan to possess any war capability, the revision of which would theoretically enable Japan to possess a nuclear weapon as well as offensive capability. However, Abe already agreed that adding a clause to Article 9 to stipulate the existence of the SDF as the military was a valid means to achieve the revision. This is not only because the revision of both clauses is unpopular amongst the public, but also the LDP executives thought it would be much easier to reach a consensus with the Komeito and some members of the opposition parties who more or less favour the revision (Kokubun, 2017).

Although this seems a reasonable decision, it is not necessarily supported by LDP members. Ishiba, for instance, sticks to the idea of deleting the second clause and rewrite by questioning ‘consistency’ of the current LDP plan for the revision with the past LDP drafts of the new constitution (Asahi Shimbun, 2017b). On the other hand, Seishiro Endo, the former chief of the then-DA, cast doubt on the idea (Asahi Shimbun, 2017g). Abe’s admission of the idea seemed even surprising to one of his close like-minded politicians, Hakubun Shimomura, who serves as deputy chief of the LDP’s Commission of the Constitution, as revealed through a media interview (Asahi Shimbun, 2017k). With these compromises, Abe stated at a press conference in July 2017 that he aimed to submit a draft of the revision by the end of the year (Asahi Shimbun, 2017i).

Unexpected delay? A series of political scandals

While the discussion regarding Article 9 stagnated, resulting in the LDP-led initiatives, there has been a series of political scandals that account for the loss of momentum of the ruling coalition to push for the revision. First, the alleged concealment of the SDF daily activity logs regarding the UN PKOs in South Sudan, which allegedly was conducted in a ‘conflict zone’ and beyond the constitutional interpretation. This inevitably raised a question for the MOD on handling information and civilian control, causing an immediate setback on the revision of Article 9 (Japan Times, 2017a). The controversy lasted until Tomomi Inada, the then-minister of defence, resigned in July 2017.

The list of scandals did not stop there. The government allegedly sold a government-owned tract of land in Osaka to Moritomo School at a substantially

discounted price, which was reported as cronyism linked to Abe and his wife (Reuters, 2014a). Similarly, Kake Gakuen (university) won approval from the government to open a new department, the founder of which was a close friend of Abe. The document that shows the distortion of the administrative process due to Abe's cronyism was disclosed (Yoshida, 2017). Scandals in relation to Abe, who thus far played a crucial role in advancing the constitutional revision, placed an additional hurdle to pursuing the revision.

Asking for the public

In the midst of the attack from the opposition parties regarding the abovementioned scandals and the dropping Cabinet support rate, the Abe administration decided to hold a snap election in October 2017. The scandals are largely a factor triggering the election (Repeta, 2017). While considering constitutional revision as the ultimate goal, Abe prioritises political legitimacy through the leaders' dilemma. The aim of the election is to stabilise the Cabinet and ask the public to let these scandals slide. The latter can be achieved by asking the public to evaluate the government on its achievements and manifesto, including constitutional revision. While Abenomics and the issues of North Korea are the main focal points, this time the manifesto clearly mentions the revision of Article 9 on the stipulation of the SDF in the constitution under the slogan of 'protecting this country' (LDP, 2017). Abe ultimately won the election five consecutive times since 2012, securing the supermajority in the Lower House with Komeito. Through the election and scandals throughout the Abe Cabinet, the progress has been two steps forward and one step back.

Unresolved issues

Winning the election and having the institutional basis for constitutional revision does not mean sound progress. Still, there is a huge divide in terms of how Article 9 is to be revised, not only amongst political parties but also within the LDP. As there was no attempt yet to negotiate with the Komeito directly, the Komeito still showed an obvious hesitation even for the compromised plan of revising Article 9 (Asahi Shimbun, 2017c). Given the strongly remaining LDP hawks, such as Ishida, within the LDP, there is yet to be any consensus; this resulted in the LDP committee of the constitutional revision giving up on issuing the LDP's plan in 2017 (Asahi Shimbun, 2017j). Thus, there have

been two unilateral processes: intra- and inter-party consensus. Nevertheless, if the constitutional revision takes place and effect as planned, not so much time is left. The law concerning the procedure of national referendum stipulates that it must take place between 60 and 180 days after the submission of the revision plan (House of Representatives, 2007), and Article 100 states that the constitution takes effect at least six months after the results of the national referendum (Cabinet, 1947c). This means that there should be at least eight months necessary for completing the revision after the submission of the constitutional revision to the Diet.

While the clock is ticking, the LDP decided to finalise the plan of revising Article 9 by the day of the annual party convention in March 2018 (Asahi Shimbun, 2018f). Although the Commission of the constitutional revision occurred in February to discuss the LDP's compromised plan it was yet not agreed officially upon within the LDP. The discussion seemingly did not even show the slightest sign of reaching a consensus. This is particularly because the discussion again fell under the 'interpretation' of the revision plan and what it implies (House of Councilors, 2018).

Given so divergent opinions, the LDP's committee proposed seven versions of the revision plan of Article 9. Two approaches can be found in the seven versions. On the one hand, two of them advocates the revision of the second clause in the way that it stipulates the SDF as the military. The five patterns stipulate that the second clause remains and a new one is added while the details of additional clause vary. Overall, it is as to whether the new clause admits the SDF or the right of self-defence, largely allowing the limited degree of CSD or full degree of it (Asahi Shimbun, 2018d). However, this could be a mere gesture of contemplating all the opinions, and the plan that the committee and Abe advocated most is adding the clause that Japan possesses the SDF, minimum degree necessary under the authority of the prime minister. This suggests the continued civilian control and following the past interpretation as to the degree of military capability and CSD (Asahi Shimbun, 2018a). In the end, the chair of the committee railroaded the original plan and suppressed the other opinions with the compromise of 'minimum degree necessary' (Asahi Shimbun, 2018e). The final draft so far is to add 'Article 9-2' that states the SDF shall be maintained 'as an armed organisation' for Japan to take 'necessary self-defence measures'.

By eliminating the part 'minimum degree necessary', this revision plan implies that Japan could take up full-degree of CSD, facilitating the possession of offensive

capabilities and lifting the hurdle of the use of force, such as a first-strike measure. This is because, given a possibility of a newly revised constitution to override the past interpretation, one of the conditions to use force—minimum degree necessary—would no longer be in effect. However, this is just speculation; nothing has yet to be finalised, even within the LDP.

The absence of the public and societal/economic groups: State-society relations

Due to the insufficient progress of the constitutional revision where the national referendum has not taken place, the public did not play a direct role in the constitutional revision planning. However, it does not mean that the substance of the public should be overlooked. This is because there is a discrepancy between a voter's preference of parties and their opinions on the constitution. Asahi's survey reveals that only 14% of voters consider the constitutional revision as a prime factor for their votes (Asahi Shimbun, 2016h). In terms of the overall view on the constitution, those who are in favour and those who are against are more or less neck and neck throughout this period. Asahi Shimbun, known to protect the constitution, conducted surveys on the view of the constitutional revision with a little more than 50% against it and a little less than 50% in favour of it, although after CSD was allowed, the proportion against the revision rose to 55% temporarily (Asahi Shimbun, 2016e). On the other hand, Yomiuri, which is a pro-constitutional revision and even suggests its original revision plan in the past, reveals that more than half prefer the revision, whilst around 40% oppose it (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2017).

The influence of the public has been arguably reduced because the LDP's plan had been compromised largely to accommodate the opposition and the coalition partner, the Komeito. After publicly promoting the idea of adding a clause to stipulate the existence of the SDF, the number of the public opposing the revision of Article 9, according to the Asahi survey, dropped to 53% from 65% between 2016 and 2018 (Asahi Shimbun, 2016e, 2018b). Similarly, the Yomiuri survey shows that 55% favour the revision plan of Article 9 (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2018). The NHK (2018) survey shows that 31% favour it, 23% oppose it, and 40% chose the answer 'hard to say'. On the other hand, in 2017 when the revision of Article 9 still implied a possibility of radical revision, the same type of survey conducted by NHK shows 57% against it and 25% in favour of it (NHK, 2017). Although there is remaining uncertainty, it is clear that the moderate version of revising Article 9 seems more popular amongst the public, and the Cabinet in this sense

effectively addressed the concerns of the public in advance despite comparatively fewer changes in the revision. Thus, the public was effectively incorporated into the policymakers' mind as well as their strategy to maintain political legitimacy while the public per se did not seem to have a direct influence.

Turning to the socio/economic groups, while economic groups such as Keidanren did not seem to get involved in passionate lobbying activities to the government, which only showed support publicly (Asahi Shimbun, 2016a), Nippon Kaigi facilitated its influence on not only the government but also the public. Nippon Kaigi is likely to have created a platform where a bipartisan group for constitutional revision is formed. The meeting of Nippon Kaigi became enlarged at the national level where politicians from the LDP, the then-DPJ, and the Restoration Party gathered to promote the constitutional revision and call for co-operation. This type of meeting is organised periodically. The organisation apparently was established under Nippon Kaigi, the organisation with the view to creating what it calls a beautiful Japanese constitution. The significance can be seen at the grass-root level. It organised a meeting for the constitutional revision where 10,000 people attended all over Japan (Utsukushi Nihon no Kenpou wo Tukuru Kokumin no Kai, 2015).

The organisation collected more than 10 million signatures as of 2018. It has apparently aimed to collect 30 million, which was considered a minimum number to win the national referendum given the low voting rate for the general election at around 50-60% (Tawara, 2016). In so doing, the number of local offices has substantially increased since 2006 and has now reached 300, which provides a platform for local politicians to participate in the promotion of constitutional revision (Tawara, 2016). Although the signatures do not guarantee and reflect a potential outcome of the national referendum at all, it is remarkable for an organisation to collect the signatures on such a controversial topic from more than 10% of the entire population. While the direct influence of the group has yet to be seen in this period, the existence cannot be neglected.

5.5 Conclusion

The chapter considers the two parallel initiatives of Japan's response to the strategic environment, centred on the constitution. The first is the allowance of CSD. First and foremost, the acute strategic environment incentivises Japan to be engaged in internal

and external balancing. CSD is a direct response to external balancing because it strengthens the interoperability and expansion of the role Japan could play in the US-Japan alliance. In the end, it took more than seven years to be approved because Abe first made it a political agenda in 2007. In this sense, leaders' image, in particular, the prime minister's image, was defined as an intervening variable and is crucial in the allowance of CSD. He invested his enormous political resources to push for it by organising his private advisory panel with like-minded individuals while other prime ministers showed obvious hesitation despite their stance to allow CSD (Asahi Shimbun, 2007s). He was also engaged in the negotiation with the Komeito and the CLB despite CSD being a political risk given its unpopularity amongst the public.

In so doing, the CLB, as part of the variable of domestic institutions is partially responsible for the outcome of allowance of the limited degree of CSD. Ultimately, it succumbed to the variable of leaders' image with the authority of the prime minister and the Cabinet as it has control over the CLB personnel (Asahi Shimbun, 2013l). The Cabinet broke down the institutional practice of the personnel by choosing the top of the CLB in Abe's favour. The institutionally embedded pacifism based on the constitution was not fundamentally challenged. The negotiation to renew the interpretation to allow was solely based on the past interpretation and, in this sense, the CLB and its accumulated institutional practice played a part in the policy outcome.

Another interplay of the intervening variables (leaders' image and domestic institutions) played a part in the analysis. Institutionally, submitting the bill to allow CSD requires at least half of the seats in both houses or the two-thirds of the seats in the Lower House, the ruling coalition managed to maintain enough political stability by emphasising aspects besides CSD when it comes the general elections (Asahi Shimbun, 2013d). Therefore, leaders in this period are adept at striking a balance between strategic needs and political stability, defined as leaders' dilemma.

Similarly, strategic culture, constituting leaders' image, has a key role in analysing constitutional reinterpretation. That is the so-called *hadome* ('brake') brought by Komeito. As a coalition partner with its relatively small number of seats, it could play a veto player, which Komeito arguably made the most of. The two leaders' image fiercely clashed between the LDP (normalist and the US ally) and Komeito (pacifism) where arguably Komeito somewhat represent the public view partially (Sataka, 2016). The Komeito incorporated its principle of protecting fundamental human right into the

conditions to exert CSD. Thus, the structure is that the strong ruling party and its leaders' image against the domestic institutions (CLB) and the Komeito, both of which represent pacifism.

Regarding state-society relations, at the point where the public voted for the ruling coalition, the public was institutionally incapable of influencing the CSD policy-making. This did not enable the opposition parties to pull strengths to challenge the ruling coalition. Similarly, the economic groups did not play any substantial role in pushing for CSD. This was probably because the LDP did what these economic groups wanted. When previous discussions of CSD prolonged in the 2000s, economic groups such as Keidanren issued a statement or policy proposal to the government to lobby, which was not particularly seen in this period.

As for the constitutional revision, there has been a strong influence of socially constructed norms of pacifism (state-society relations) and again Komeito (leaders' image) despite the increased possibility of constitutional revision in comparison with the past. The initial plan of constitutional revision of Article 9 advocated by the LDP is the stipulation of the SDF as the military without any constraints on the capacity of the SDF and possessions of military capability towards what is called a normal country. However, at an early stage, leaders made a decision based on the leaders' dilemma to construct a much more moderate version. Although it is remarkable as to how many political resources of the Cabinet and Abe himself was invested, there is still a long way for the constitutional revision.

The reason lies in all the intervening variables. First, again, in the form of leaders' image, the Komeito played the role of *hadome* in preventing the LDP from advocating the radical/original version of revising Article 9. It has kept casting doubt on revising Article 9 despite the ruling coalition with some opposition parties, forming a supermajority to submit the plan of the revision (Sataka, 2016). It did not even show intention for negotiation. Institutionally, the commissions of constitutional revision in both houses were incapable of reaching a consensus, the outcome of which seems fairly reasonable. This is because each party has the different constitutional vision and their ideological incompatibility such that simple discussion of the diet where all the party just stated their views seems significantly insufficient. This led to the secret negotiation again between the Komeito and the LDP which, this time, did not work as a certain amount of the LDP members did not compromise their strategic views on revising

Article 9 (Asahi Shimbun, 2017c). In the end, even before starting the negotiation with the ruling partner like the case of CSD, the LDP at most forcibly made the party members agree with the compromised vision of Article 9.

In comparison with CSD, the state-society relations have a relatively strong influence on the process of the constitutional revision. This is particularly because it requires a supermajority in both houses and the national referendum, leaders seem more conscious of their duty to maintain political stability. Although the ruling coalition and leaders managed to have an institutional foundation to push for the revision, the public view on supporting the revision still lacks momentum for the national referendum (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2017). In this sense, the socio-economic groups, in particular, Nippon Kaigi not only played a part but also will be a critical actor for influencing the public view to accept the revision. Its engagement in public at the grass-roots level already had signatures from more than 10% of the entire population to support it.

However, as of 2018, more than ten years after Abe took initiatives to revise the constitution through his first administration in 2007, the progress of the revision was yet to be achieved despite the changing strategic environment. Leaders' image, particularly prime minister's image, again confirmed its importance as a fundamental factor that not only made it possible to allocate substantial political resources but also maintained political stability enough for initiating the constitutional revision. Nevertheless, the idea of the constitutional revision was such that it seems extremely hard to reach a consensus even within the LDP, which long advocated for the revision. In terms of constitutional revision, the influence of the Komeito as a quasi-veto player was crystallised through the variable of domestic institutions. It again played a substantial role in explaining the absence of Japan's response to the strategic environment, which seemed compounded by leaders' image and incorporated the public as part of their dilemma.

6 Case Study II: Ballistic Missile Defence

6.1 Introduction: A Brief History of Ballistic Missile Defence in Japan

First, this chapter is dedicated to explaining what BMD is and what are its implications for Japan with the operationalisation of NCR in the case of BMD by applying the intervening variables. Second, it briefly traces the initial development of BMD in the 1990s to understand the foundations for the decision surrounding BMD. Third, it traces how the government came to issue the Cabinet decision to acquire and develop BMD in tandem with the US. Most importantly, this chapter is engaged in the subsequent development of BMD and its surrounding institutional barriers—known as the institutionalised form of anti-militarism—with a discussion of the grand strategic shift. The chapter is divided into three phases: legal preparation phase (2004–2008; defensive realist strategy), qualitative development and the completion of deployment phase (2009–2012) the consolidation of defensive realist strategy), and the revolution of defence structure and the change in BMD-related issues (2012–2018; a nascent offensive realist strategy).

What Is Ballistic Missile Defence, and What Are Its implications for Japan?

BMD is a system through which an incoming ballistic missile is tracked, intercepted and destroyed, which has been continuously developed during and after the Cold War (Ota, 2009). As the US ambitious plan, the Strategic Defence Initiatives, had its roots in BMD, it is the US-led globally covered defence system that required the participation of other countries with the more integrated multilayered system. It aimed to defend against virtually any missile attacks regardless of the geographical location of such launches. As such, Japan's participation and the actual context of its contribution may fluctuate depending on the US strategic shift. For instance, when the US did not clearly differentiate National Missile Defence from Theatre Missile Defence—a regionally focused missile defence system—Japan showed hesitation towards active participation due to the concerns of violating 'CSD' under such a highly integrated defence system controlled by the US (Jinbo, 2002).

In general, there are several phases to addressing incoming missile attacks: boost, midcourse and terminal (Kaneda, 2016). The boost phase refers to the period between the launch of a missile and its motors firing until reaching peak velocity. The

destruction of a missile in the boost phase is the earliest and arguably the most ideal because it minimises potential damages despite practical problems. First, the action time is very limited—roughly within one minute—during which it must be determined whether the launch is directed towards the territory of a state in question (National Research Council, 2012). Second, to destroy the missile in the boost phase, it is vital to deploy the relevant defence system—be it ground-, air- or sea-based interceptors—close to the location of the launch. Third, and most relevant to Japan, ordering the destruction of the missile is predicated on the assumption that the missile's trajectory must be known. In the case of Japan, unless the missile is headed directly towards its territory, attacking the missile clearly violates the limit of individual self-defence (Ota, 2009).

The second phase is called midcourse, which refers to the period between the missile achieving peak velocity and re-entering the atmosphere (Kaneda, 2016). This comprises most of the flying time of a missile and is the longest time to intercept it. Notwithstanding the allowance of time to receive signals from sensors, it is arguably the most difficult phase to destroy a missile. Gronlund, Wright and Young (2002) observe that the 'discrimination' of a missile from other objects, such as decoys or debris in outer space, is a huge hindrance to the current BMD system.

The final phase is terminal, in which a missile starts descending and re-entering the atmosphere to hit the actual target. Because it is the very last phase of a missile's trajectory, one could argue that attacking it in this phase is the simplest in terms of technology and practicality, which in turn reduces the reaction time (Kaneda, 2016).

Some technologies involved in BMD overlap each phase of the ballistic missile. One of the most critical elements of BMD is sensor devices (Morimoto, 2002). Because a single sensor is never sufficient to properly detect and accurately track a missile, many sensors are integrated into BMD. They can be satellite, aircraft, sea-based, land-based sensors, a role of which should be different for each type of sensor. For instance, to detect the launch of a missile, radars and sensors are used to track the rapidly increasing thermal level or the heat of the missile fuel. Therefore, using an infrared-based sensor that is currently loaded in satellites or military aircraft is the main way to approach the missile.

To destroy an incoming missile, there are also many types of attacking systems. For the boost phase, Wilkening (2004) argues that ground, naval and airborne platforms

equipped with boost-phase interceptor can be an effective way to destroy the missile. A boost-phase interceptor generally suggests kinetic-kill vehicles, which with its kinetic energy hits the missile to neutralise it. In a more developed form, Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) appears effective, which is now jointly deployed in South Korea. It is designed to address multiple phases of a missile attack, including high altitude and long-range missiles (Yingbo & Yong, 2003). In the midcourse phase, Ground-Based Interceptor is a common land-based missile (Ota, 2009). As for the terminal phase, patriot missiles—now Patriot Advanced Capability 3—and Aegis system with Standard Missile (SM-3) are commonly deployed. The way in which BMD is developed and how it can be co-ordinated with other countries are not necessarily fixed but rather depend on the strategic and military reasons concerning the type and significance of a threat.

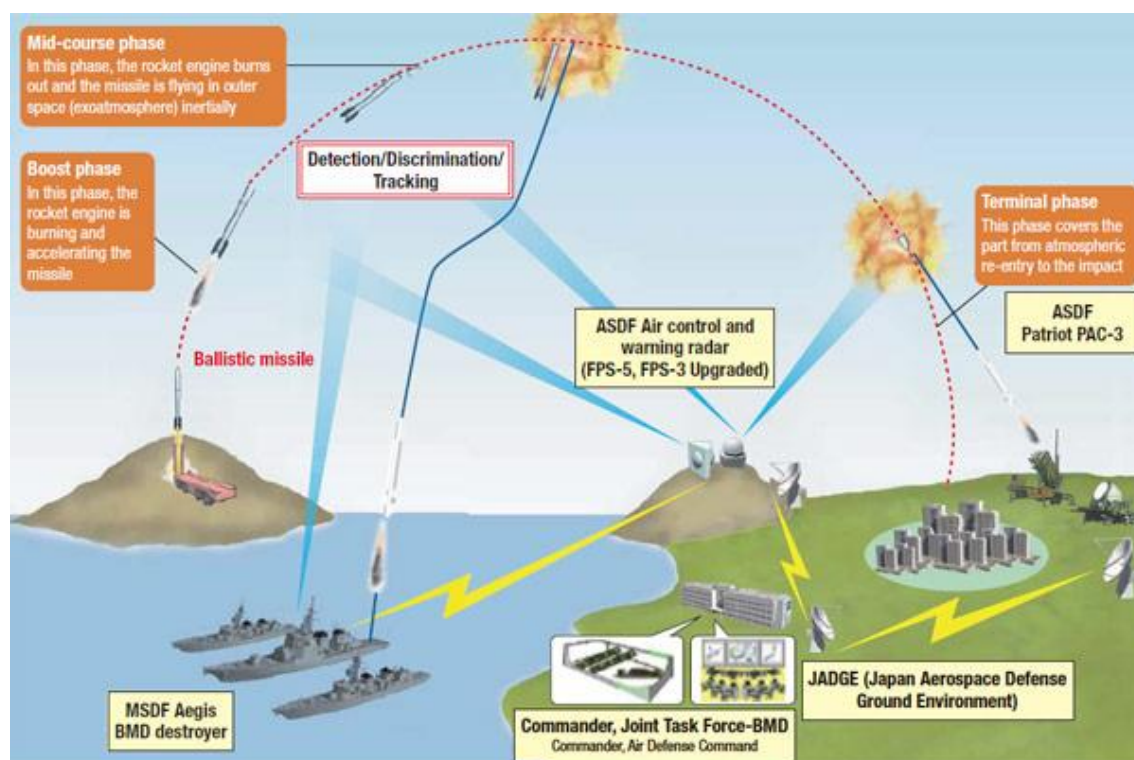


Figure 6.1 The Operational Concept of BMD (retrieved from the MoD)

Key Actors in and Domestic Hurdles to Ballistic Missile Defence for Japan

There are many actors and institutional hurdles for Japan to pursue BMD that can be effectively categorised with reference to intervening variables. As discussed, leaders—the prime minister, the relevant Cabinet ministers, and relevant and so-called

kokubō-zoku—face a dilemma of political legitimacy because there is a need to maintain political stability or perceive the sufficient imminence of an attack. The ideal way to respond to the structural incentives is heavily influenced by ‘strategic cultures’ that individuals hold: the US ally, normalist, UN centrism and pacifism. It is also possible that amongst leaders, depending on whether bureaucrats or politicians, there can be a significant information asymmetry that gives bargaining power to those who are in an advantageous position to construct a policy.

BMD is a critical opportunity for those who lean towards the US ally because it was initially US initiatives and request for Japan to participate. Many prime ministers, such as Koizumi and Abe, recognise the importance of BMD to the US-Japan security alliance (Shinzo Abe, 2006a) the MOFA, 2006). Normalists such as Ishiba Shigeru (an influential *kokubō-zoku* and minister of defence between 2002 and 2004) and Seiji Maehara from the DPJ under the Kan administration (then-minister of foreign affairs) saw how BMD is crucial for Japan’s security policy and advocated for ‘counter-strike capability’ to be able to protect Japan independently (Asahi Shimbun, 2003i). Categorised by Samuels (2006) as a ‘middle power UN-centrist’, Yōhei Kōno, then-deputy prime minister in the Murayama administration (1994–1995) and minister of foreign affairs (1994–1996 and 1999–2001), was sceptical about BMD; he emphasised the need for diplomatic dialogue with North Korea (Yomiuri Shimbun, 1999) and argued for cautious discussion with the US to clarify for what BMD is needed (Yomiuri Shimbun, 1993). Political parties, established on pacifist ideology, such as Komeito and the SDP, have denied active participation in BMD initiatives based on the common position that the CSD should not be allowed (Asahi Shimbun, 1995b).

The institutionalised form of anti-militarism can be considered a barrier to pursuing BMD that is defined here as one of the intervening variables: domestic institutions. Domestic institutions are regulations, laws and constitutions that constrain a particular policy-making or policy area. In the case of BMD, a number of institutional constraints would potentially prevent it from developing (Jimbo, 2002). First, based on the technical aspects explained at the beginning of this chapter, the US military is an integral part of BMD deployment in Japan. Associated with the development phase of BMD, the ban on arms export was enacted in the form of *danwa* (official statement of the Cabinet) in 1967 under the Satō administration, which later in 1976 prohibited not just the export of arms but also military-related technological transfer (T. Morimoto, 2015). Because the US requested initially joint R&D that may involve the exchange of

military technology and equipment, this regulation is a potential barrier.

Second, there is a regulation regarding the use of space. Japan did not have a specific law concerning the use of space. The National Space Development Agency of Japan (NASDA) therefore was established in 1969 for the use of space for ‘only peaceful purposes’, which excluded military usage or exploration (Asahi Shimbun, 1997b). This regulation is significant because BMD essentially comprises radars and sensors, some of which are space satellites. Military spy satellites or reconnaissance satellites for military purposes thus are restricted, placing substantial constraints on BMD deployment (Hughes, 2009).

The third aspect is that the issue of CSD, in the actual deployment of BMD developed in accordance with the US, suggests integral usage of the BMD system of the two countries are expected (Asahi Shimbun, 2001a). One critical concern is that, for instance, in the case of attacking an incoming missile from the boost phase, it is hard to recognise the direction of the missile—be it Japan or the US. This implies deploying Japan’s BMD to address a missile aimed for the US, which, by definition, means the exercise of the right of CSD. The fourth aspect is the loose definition of ‘the renunciation of the possession of war potentials’ and the interpretation of ‘the right of self-defence’. The current government interpretation allows the ‘possess[ion of] the minimum level of armed force needed to exercise that right’ (Urata, 2017). BMD can be regarded as a defensive system that may obviate the need for reinterpretation to deploy BMD. However, the possession of counter-strike ability as part of BMD is questionable in the interpretation of the constitution (Takahashi, 2005).

Finally, the restriction of military research by academics or universities is regulated by the Science Council of Japan. It issued a statement in 1950 that research in relation to war would not be conducted. In 1967, the statement was renewed to prohibit research involving military purposes. Thus, ‘dual-use research was not possible (Science Council of Japan, 2017), which may result in a lack of progress/facilitation in BMD development. The above factors may serve as institutional barriers to the development of BMD and its deployment.

In the case of BMD, not only leaders who may or may not challenge these constraints to pursue but also other actors with vested interests surrounding BMD and its relevant institutional constraints may give further impetus or incentives to act in favour of BMD

development. The METI—famously known by the work of Johnson (1982) for its influence on industrial policy—supports BMD because it not only strengthens the defence sector and R&D with technology acquisition capabilities but also provides ‘spin-off’ benefits to commercial sectors (Swaine *et al.*, 2001).

As with other countries’ defence industry, there were concerns about weakening indigenous defence production in Japan. The post-Cold War movement of disarmament and reform of the European and US defence industries has led to mergers and acquisitions and joint business partnerships for research (Samuels, 2007). In Japan, some withdrawal of relative minor defence-related firms was seen; due to the ban on arms export, the Japanese defence industry faced particular difficulty maintaining its business. Unless there was a lift of the ban, many faced a deadlock in the defence industry. Concern about lagging behind technological co-operation and transfer and shrinking production capacity of indigenous defence industry was raised by Keidanren—a representative of industries in Japan in the form of ‘proposition’ to the government (Keidanren, 2004). Economic interests are effectively noted in the case of BMD. As analysed in more detail later, these actors may have their connection either with politicians or bureaucrats who will be able to push for particularly because there can be mutually beneficial incentives, such as corruption or *amakudari* (‘descent from heaven’) where senior bureaucrats are given a position in the private sector after retirement as an institutional practice (Gauder, 2011).

The way politicians and other actors interact can be examined through the intervening variable of state-society relations that captures the economic interests of particular group or individuals whose influence on policy-making cannot simply be ignored. The cost of BMD development and deployment is unrivalled to other military equipment simply because it is a comprehensive system that integrates numerous military technologies, equipment and weapons (Kaneda, 2016). Therefore, as Samuels (2007) suggested, what matters in the decision-making of BMD is not necessarily the public response but its costs, which proved correct with subsequent increase in budget in additional aegis destroyers and new BMD equipment such as Aegis Ashore. This suggests there should be a window of opportunity for the domestic defence industry with substantial profits if they can get involved in the production by receiving orders (Noda, 2005). Furthermore, if they failed to join in this business opportunity, Japan would have to simply put up with a sheer amount of military expenditure without any return to the domestic economy, leading the indigenous defence market to shrink

further.

Such a backdrop was well recognised by the defence industry, as Mitsubishi Heavy Industries demonstrated the very initial interests in the Anti-Ballistic Missile system in the 1980s by conducting research. In fact, the thrift of the defence industry brings about benefits to politicians and bureaucrats as well as some SDF members in the form of *amakudari* ('corruption') that serves as a mechanism through which the voices of the defence industry are represented by bureaucrats or politicians (Igarashi, 2018).

Table 6.1 The Details of Intervening Variables for the Case of BMD

Variables	Strategic environment	Leaders' image	Domestic institutions	State-society relations
Factors constituting each variable	China, US and North Korea	*The prime minister The Cabinet members (in particular the minister of the DA and MOFA) The DA The MOFA	Institutionalised form of Anti-militarism Coalition parties Ban on arms export, Ban on CSD Peaceful use of space 1% ceiling on the Defence budget Policymaking Constitution Law/regulations on decision-making	The public The defence industry
*Leaders' image is categorised and analysed with reference to the four strategic cultures: the US ally, normalist, UN-centrism and pacifism				

The late 1980s and early 1990s: Confusion and resistance against BMD under the Cold War

The discussion of BMD was relatively intense in the Diet debate in the 1980s after the

Regan administration issued the SDI in 1983; however, the context under which such a discussion occurred should be considered in the then-strategic environment (Wilkening, 2000). Although most of the initial plans failed, such as particle-beam weapons, and the concept of BMD had not yet emerged, the idea of the SDI was such that the US-led defence system should cover the entire globe against missile attacks (de facto). Most importantly, the strategic plan of the US was predicated primarily on the assumption that the Cold War and bipolarity would have continued for the next decade (Lennon, 2002). Therefore, Japan, which had preserved the involvement in the Cold War with the Yoshida Doctrine, was rather sceptical of the SDI. The examination of the Diet debate seems to suggest that active involvement in the US overarching defence project is a far-fetched idea.

Though the transfer of military technologies from Japan to the US was allowed in 1983, concerns arose in the Diet debate regarding potential indirect involvement in the US SDI through the transfer in the mid-1980s, even before the US requested to participate. At this time, even leaders with the view of US ally found it hard to pursue the strategic cultural stance due to the firmly entrenched domestic institutions stemming from the pacifist constitution and relevant self-imposed constraints (O'Donogue, 2000).

Without any specific plans or objectives in terms of BMD due to the ongoing research of the missile defence system by the US and the lack of specificity, policymakers were cornered in the Diet debate. Yasuhiro Nakasone, the then-prime minister, who is famously known as a US ally strategic culture, was accused of a lack of 'autonomy' vis-à-vis the US (House of Representatives, 1984b). Concerns were raised regarding the potential transfer of military technology to the US, leading to the further expansion of the space race (House of Representatives, 1984b). Related to this, the lack of government stance regarding space use surfaced (House of Councilors, 1984a); with the emphasis of 'autonomy', some said the government urged the US to drop the SDI due to the UN General Assembly's decision to limit space exploration (House of Representatives, 1984c).

Because the US defence system plan was phrased 'space ballistic missile defence system' (Uchū Dandō Misairu Bōei Shisutemu), it was interpreted by policymakers as closely linked to 'Star Wars' between the US and the USSR (House of Representatives, 1984a). Despite a clear absence of Japan's action, there were many attempts to give the warning to prevent any further actions under the Cold War, which is also manifested in

the form of West Pacific Missile Defence Architecture (WESTPAC).

After the end of the Cold War: The temporal absence of ‘threats’

North Korea tested a missile, known as a Nodong-1, on 29 May 1993 and fired it into the Sea of Japan. Despite the proximity, it did not impose a significant threat to Japan in the sense of policy-making. Arguably this is because North Korea aimed to show its missile capacity so that it could export the missile to Iran in exchange for oil (D. Sanger, 1993). However, it was indeed two weeks later when the relevant news was reported, even though Isao Ishizuka, the then chief of staff in the SDF, was aware of the threat and told the media that if North Korea launched the missile towards Japan, there was no way to deal with it so far (Asahi Shimbun, 1993b). Together with the absence of a meeting of the UN Security Council, Japan did not take a specific action or response.

Accordingly, policymakers in Japan were concerned with the further proliferation of nuclear weapons. Kabun Mutō, then-minister of foreign affairs, stated in the Diet that it would be ideal if the US addressed the withdrawal of North Korea from the NPT through negotiation (House of Representatives, 1993a). Tadashi Ikeda, then-chief of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, represented the MOFA and stated there had been no evidence to suggest that North Korea would attack or invade South Korea; therefore regarding its withdrawal from the NPT, it would be better to cautiously observe how the negotiation went (House of Councilors, 1993). However, the US and South Korea at the time had already agreed to recognise North Korean nuclear issues as significant threats (Asahi Shimbun, 1993). In the end, it has been nearly three months since the missile test when Naoaki Murata, then-administrative vice minister of the DA, raised concerns about North Korea as a potential threat with the consideration of acquiring an AWACS (airborne warning and control system) which enables the SDF to detect potential missile launches (House of Councilors, 1984b).

It is also important to note that the absence of discussion of the potential threat is accounted for by the political instability, which enhanced the grand strategy of soft balancing in 1993 when the LDP finally handed over the baton to the grand coalition of eight parties. Amongst these were the Socialist Party, the SDP and the Komeito, all well known for pacifist strategic culture (Krauss & Pekkanen, 2011). Concurrently, Japan attempted to overcome the trauma of the Gulf War criticism through active participation in UN-led humanitarian assistance—UN centrism as a strategic culture—through which

the conventional pacifist parties came to recognise the existence of the SDF (Funabashi, 1997).

Therefore, even after the gradual recognition of North Korea as a potential threat in the latter half of 1993, mainly pointed out by the LDP as the opposition party, there was hesitation towards action. Sadao Yamahana, the then-Cabinet member of the Hosokawa administration in 1993, hoped to normalise ties with North Korea and insisted on a diplomatic dialogue with accordance with the three non-nuclear principles (Funabashi, 1997). On the other hand, the then-prime minister advocated the need to co-operate with neighbouring countries to address the North Korean missile issues and stated there was no concrete discussion regarding the participation in TMD (House of Representatives, 1993b). Tsutomu Hata, then-minister of foreign affairs, also showed the stance of observing the efforts of the IAEA, the US and South Korea (House of Representatives, 1993c).

1998: The second North Korean missile is a game-changer

Japan prolonged and extended the deadline to answer the US request to participate in BMD deployment. In 1994, the Hatayama administrative vice minister, at the press conference, stated that the Cabinet would decide as to whether Japan should join BMD initiatives (co-deployment) by the end of the next year, which did not happen (Krauss & Pekkanen, 2011)a. TMD US-Japan working group meeting had occurred on an almost biannual basis since 1996 (Asahi Shimbun, 1996). However, the meeting did not lead Japan's conclusion as to whether it would introduce such an anti-ballistic missile system. The same goes for the 2+2 meeting (two ministers from the DA and the MOFA and the US counterparts) in 1997 (Asahi Shimbun, 1997c). In the end, what changed is the structural incentives through the second launch of a North Korean missile in August 1998. The second missile launch by North Korea on 31 August 1998, facilitated the process of BMD acquisition to a substantial degree by altering the perception of leaders, inflating public anxiety and giving leverage to those who already showed strong interest in it (the New York Times, 1998).

From this incident, North Korea was regarded as 'a threat' to Japan. Two days after the missile launch, Masahiko Takamura, then-minister of the MOFA, 'express[ed] the deepest regret' (*kiwamete ikan*), one of the severest expressions in Japanese diplomacy, exceeding the degree of expression of the US which used 'raising concerns' (House of

Representatives, 1998). The same statement is seen by the minister of the DA, Fukushima Nukaga (House of Councilors, 1998). Even opposition parties accused the ruling party of lacking severity in response to North Korea (House of Councillors, 1998). The media itself showed unparalleled attention to it in comparison with the 1993 missile launch. Taking *Yomiuri Shimbun* as an example, and including morning and afternoon newspapers, there were 24 individual articles dedicated to the missile launch the day after it.

That the information related to the missile launch was given by the US (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, 1998a), the LDP held a meeting with *kokubō-zoku* and relevant members to decide to acquire a multipurpose satellite; one goes as far to say it was a spy satellite (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, 1998b). Within two weeks, the US-Japan 2+2 meeting concluded to proceed with the joint research with further emphasis on the need for BMD. On 21 September, both agreed on the initiation of research about the SDF's Aegis destroyers with the capability to launch ballistic missiles as part of a BMD system (Jinbo, 2002).

This announcement was officially made in December and included a request for a 960 million yen research budget in 1999, a considerable increase from 20 million yen in 1996 (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, 1998d). Accordingly, the government got in first the taboos by making a Statement of Chief Cabinet Secretary that the joint research with the following acquisition of spy satellites does not conflict with the peaceful use of space and the ban on arms export (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, 1998c). Furthermore, the Cabinet phrased BMD as the 'irreplaceable means' although it still hedged as to whether Japan would develop, acquire, and deploy BMD (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, 1998c). The details of the future research were also finalised. There were four major areas: (1) an infrared sensor to detect missiles, (2) a cover to protect such sensors from friction and heat from the atmosphere, (3) a ballistic missile to directly attack incoming missiles and (4) a missile motor and engine (*Asahi Shimbun*, 1999b). These are rather supplemental research which does not directly lead to the acquisition of BMD.

Between 1999 and 2001, after the initial decision to join the research with the US-Japan's stance was 'see how others react the decision' and 'what the US would do' as the continued stance of 'hedging', given China and Russia's intensive opposition and the revision of ABM. It was until the point when the US withdrew from the ABM, which was virtually terminated when Japan moved on to the next grand strategic shift to defensive realism. The ABM treaty, signed by the US and the Soviet Union in 1972,

aimed to limit each country's sites for missile defence to two and to 100 ABMs. Because the US at the time also was engaged in R&D, the deployment of BMD as part of National Missile Defence would be likely to violate the treaty.

The US, therefore, began negotiations with Russia along with the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty I (START I), which did not come to fruition. Until the US did not differentiate TND and NMD, Japan could do nothing but wait for the outcome of the negotiation (Swaine *et al*, 2001). Proceeding with the research with the US would shift the focus solely to NMD, and Japan would be on the verge of violating the CSD. Hajime Nakatani, then-chief of the DA, stated that Japan should cautiously observe and wait whilst carefully considering the opinions of NATO, European countries, and Russia and China (House of Representatives, 2001). In fact, China repeatedly raised concerns regarding Japan's participation in the BMD research as well as the US initiative itself because the development would be able to neutralise Chinese ICBMs (Morimoto, 2002).

Japan chose to continue the research before making a decision to deploy BMD and improve what it already possessed whilst making efforts to gain understanding from its neighbours. Noroda (then-DA minister) went to Seoul to discuss BMD and enhance its understanding of Japan's participation with BMD (Asahi Shimbun, 1999a). Prime Minister Obuchi showed his intention to have a chance to explain Japan's BMD-related activities to China (Asahi Shimbun, 1999c). Japan could enhance its capabilities rather than change its content. It decided to improve the existing radar and sensor system for information gathering, which facilitated the analysis of suspicious North Korean activities, albeit not substantial military capability development (Asahi Shimbun, 2000a).

China's increasing defence budget and 9/11 facilitated the DA to create an additional threat to Japan. In 2000, it was the first time since the publication of the defence white paper that stated Japan was within the range of Chinese ballistic missiles, recognising it as a threat (Defense Agency, 2000) and promoting a further need for BMD. In June 2002, the US withdrew from the ABM after its 6-month notice.

Although it took another year to issue the Cabinet decision to finally deploy and develop BMD, its development was already underway after US withdrawal. Relevant actors with parochial interests moved first. The MOFA-funded organisation, the

Japan–American Cultural Society, and the exchange of Japan-US Lawmakers on National Security Issues organised a meeting between *kokubō-zoku* and Donald Rumsfeld, then-chairman of the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States. The LAND Institute invited a Japanese researcher from the DA (Kouji Kawakami) and issued a report on ‘Japan and BMD’ to promote its need (Noda & Tanaka, 2009). The Japan Forum for Strategic Studies, where the main members were *kokubō-zoku*, including those retired, was established as a think-tank to promote US security ties and the relevant rearrangement of legal barriers. The Japan Foundation annually organised the official visit of the *kokubō-zoku*, including Kyuma, Maehara and Ishiba, to the US since 1997 to meet US counterparts. In 1999, Keidanren also established a new committee, the US-Japan Industry Forum for Security (IFSEC), which termed itself as an ‘unofficial advisory group’ and whose chair came from Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (Jinbo, 2002). It even began to issue a proposal regarding the Medium-Term Defense Force Buildup Program, identifying the problems as to developing and deploying jointly with emphasis on co-operation between the US and Japan’s defence industries. This includes the need to lift the ban on the export of arms and a proposal for active participation in Japanese firms beyond the defence industry.

The DA and the Cabinet initiated the materialisation of BMD development before the Cabinet decision. The Cabinet showed its intention to consider the acquisition of PAC3, one of the main missiles for BMD (Asahi Shimbun, 2003k). A spy satellite was launched (H2A) in 2003 before settling the issue of space use. The plan of deployment seemed concretised: two phases of BMD with SM3 on Aegis destroyers and PAC3 identified through the DA budget request (Asahi Shimbun, 2003j). Inevitably the legal arrangement began as well, which is discussed in more detail in the following section (Asahi Shimbun, 2003h).

In the end, the Cabinet passed the defence budget for BMD, which was 140 times higher than the budget for BMD in 1998 (1 billion yen) (Asahi Shimbun, 2003f), whilst the DPJ planned to ask for 550 billion yen as part of a manifesto (Asahi Shimbun, 2003e). The Cabinet finally decided to introduce and deploy BMD on 19 December 2003. It is important to note that even though the joint research would finish by 2005–06, Japan decided to deploy BMD before that and aimed to complete the deployment in 2007 (Asahi Shimbun, 2003g). With acquisition and development, the grand strategy shifted from hedging to a defensive realist state.

Summary of the Period

This section first outlines a brief explanation of BMD as a defence system and its implications for Japanese acquisition using the intervening variables. As expected from the hypothesis, the strategic environment did matter for BMD development. In the late 1980s and up until 1998, Japan did not see any particular threats that required the need to develop BMD. The examination of the Diet record shows that initially BMD was discussed with the absence of threats such as North Korea and China (House of Councillors, 1998). This stance was not altered even when North Korea conducted its first missile launch in 1993. In particular, the early 1990s saw the nascent emergence of the strategic culture of UN centrism along with the SDF's participation in PKOs, which was well supported by the Hata, Hosokawa and Murayama administrations. The distance between the DA and defence industry and the Cabinet was so substantial that none of the attempts materialised, such as the defence industry's activities to join the SDF. Arguably, the DA was well aware of North Korea as a threat, which led to the establishment of relevant research units in the mid to late 1990s (Asahi Shimbun, 1997b). However, Japan never showed the attitude to decline the US request, which characterises the grand strategy of hedging in this era, stemming from the nuanced mixed strategic cultures of UN centrism and US ally.

Whilst leaders' view is important in formulating the government's stance, the DA and defence industry—the latter of which is a part of the variable of state-society relations—also played a crucial role, even in this stage. In particular, the actors with vested interests of 'maintaining the indigenous defence industry' were actively engaged in the promotion of BMD ahead of leaders. They constantly attempted to identify areas for participation and lobbying to abolish self-imposed constraints, such as the ban on the export of arms (Noda, 2005). In this sense, even before the discussion about them as a legal arrangement began, these domestic institutions—legally institutionalised form of anti-militarism—kept functioning as a barrier to them.

However, the aggravating strategic environment substantially facilitated the discussion of potential BMD deployment since 1998 when North Korea conducted its second missile launch near the Sea of Japan. Hypotheses regarding the relations between the strategic environment and BMD development are provided in Table 6.2

Table 6.2 Hypotheses of the Case of BMD

Hypothesis number	Grand strategic shift	Hypothesis
H1	Soft-balancing	A non-military tool to conduct Japan's security policy. BMD is not pursued because of the permissive nature of the given strategic environment.
H2	Hedging	BMD is under consideration but not actively pursued in the relatively permissive strategic environment.
H3	Defensive realist	In the restrictive environment, defensive capabilities are enhanced through BMD.
H4	Offensive realist	In the more restrictive strategic environment, Japan actively pursue offensive capabilities through BMD

The discussion of the media, public and policymakers was incomparably intensified, furthering activities of the DA and the defence industry along with establishing new institutions and think-tanks (Swaine *et al*, 2001). The decades-long efforts of the DA paid off in the early 2000s when the government decided to introduce BMD. Without the DA's dedication to the concretised plan of the introduction, in the form of eight years of research, it would not have been possible for Japan to have a clear vision of how to deploy BMD at that time. Last, as part of state-society relations, the public reaction—a socially accepted norm of anti-militarism—did not appear, although it might have been under consideration by each administration.

Despite the constant concerns in the media and the Diet regarding BMD's potential to trigger an arms race in East Asia, the public did not have a considerable aversion to or interest in it. This may have stemmed from the technicality of BMD.

In summary, Japan underwent a grand strategic shift, from a decade of hedging to now defensive realism, thereby enhancing its defensive capabilities. The following section explores how the defensive realist strategy continued to shape Japan's defence policy between 2004 and 2008 with NCR to examine when, how and why each intervening variable played a role in BMD development in Japan.

6.2 Ballistic Missile Defence: Materialisation of Defensive Realist Strategy between 2004 and 2009

Due to the institutionalised form of anti-militarism—part of the intervening variable of domestic institutions, stemming from Article 9, the actual deployment of BMD requires legal rearrangement that leads to the weakening of anti-militarism or ‘remilitarisation’ (Hughes, 2007). In the process together with technical aspects of the BMD deployment between 2004 and 2009, Japan completed the shift of its grand strategy from hedging to defensive realism. At the point at which the Cabinet issued a decision to deploy BMD, some of the domestic institutions must be amended, such as the use of space and the civilian control that is represented through the SDF law (Hughes, 2004). Further necessity arose to reconsider the ban on arms export and the CSD as the US is an integral part of BMD system in Japan.

Under the law about civilian control at the time, the limited action time—approximately 10 minutes from North Korea to reach Japan—made it virtually impossible for gathering approval from all the Cabinet members (T. Morimoto, 2002). Because comprehensive and precise information gathering and monitoring are essential in detecting missiles, necessitating the use of space for security purposes, the space law that was restricted for only ‘peaceful use’ needs revision (Swaine *et al*, 2001). Japan, engaged in joint research of BMD with the US since the late 1990s, would not be able to embark on its development and co-production without the US unless it could afford to purchase all the relevant equipment and system from the US. Given the limited budget and 1% GDP ceiling on the defence budget, the ban on arms export that prohibits technological transfer to the US is naturally a scope of reconsideration.

Practical deployment and utilisation of BMD touch the issues of CSD, and the current interpretation presupposes that Japan is constitutionally unable to address missiles towards the US with the BMD system in Japan (Hughes, 2001). Furthermore, BMD in Japan is not functional without US radars and Aegis destroyers, part of the US forces based in Japan. The period between 2004 and 2008 is arguably characterised as the starting point at which Japan has set in motion to be free from many of the long-standing constraints. Surrounded by those domestic constraints on the matter of BMD, it is quintessential to grasp the shift of domestic politics together with leaders and the public as well as continuous strive of actors in the defence industry. The chapter argues that while acknowledging the critical role played by the strategic environment,

without the close examination of the intervening variables, one cannot see how and why Japan shifted and materialised the grand strategy of defensive realist-oriented policy.

The convergence of leaders' image in the realm of quasi-two-party politics

Taking advantage of information asymmetry of BMD with the potential threat of North Korea and non-partisan effort by Kokubo-zoku, leaders came to agree on the importance of BMD (Noda, 2005). As part of an initial research budget in the 1990s, there seemed a certain amount allocated for 'study group' for BMD for Kokubo-zoku (a non-partisan group) where they and DA officials could deepen their understanding of BMD. Be it a conference or small meeting, the US officials were often invited to give a talk, which, given US keenness on Japan's participation, it can be speculated to be more of a sales and promotion talk (Akiyama, 2002). Seiji Maehara (the DPJ) and Akio Kyuma (the LDP) visited the US annually to attend the meeting for US-Japan security co-operation under the fund made by the Japan Foundation and administered by the MOFA (M. Noda & Tanaka, 2009). The young Kokubo-zoku, such as Maehara, were dubbed with Neo-Kokubo-zoku in the sense that these had a more escalated view on security policy advocate counter-strike capability and constitutional revision and considered the self-imposed constraints as outdated (Asahi Shimbun, 2003l).

With the explanation of the US request and BMD as the only means for a ballistic missile, the consensus was gradually made. The then-prime minister, Koizumi whose view on security policy was influenced by the strategic culture of the US ally, not only saw the importance of the joint research for BMD but also decided to deploy together with his enthusiasm for the Cabinet-led policy-making (Green, 2006). He organised a private advisory body for Security and Defence in 2004, which later issued the Araki report. Based on the report, the concept of integrated use of Air, Ground and Marine SDF led to the revision of the National Defence Programme Outline for the first time in nine years since 1995 (Defense Agency, 2004a). Makiko Tanaka, as the then-minister of MOFA, who had strong concerns and doubts about BMD, seemed to yield to the consensus of the LDP and the prime minister's view because it did not reflect the Cabinet's decision (Asahi Shimbun, 2001c). Ishiba served as the director of the DA, who, as discussed, was an enthusiast for BMD, went a step further to argue the urgent need to lift the overall ban on arms export, the statement of which was later denied by the chief cabinet secretary as the Cabinet's stance (Asahi Shimbun, 2004g).

The leaders of the subsequent administrations shared more or less the same view on BMD, although since then each administration was rather short-lived. Abe made numerous attempts to revolutionise areas surrounding BMD. He quickly organised a private advisory group to discuss the possibility of CSD to address missiles directed towards the US (Asahi Shimbun, 2007b). The initiative regarding the secrecy law was taken by Abe, which enhanced the intelligence communication between the two and led to closer and better co-operation of BMD (Asahi Shimbun, 2007f). The acquisition of counter-strike capability was one of his thoughts, as demonstrated by his agreement with the LDP Defence Committee to propose the acquisition (Asahi Shimbun, 2009m). Although none of these came to fruition, Abe's image was essentially embedded in revisionism or normalisation. However, his means of achieving his goal was to strengthen the US alliance to a greater degree, which confirms his strategic vision as a US ally.

The subsequent Fukuda administration did not pursue any of Abe's initiatives, arguably with the view to creating 'de facto regime change' within the LDP to maintain its position of the ruling party. This does not necessarily mean that Fukuda was against BMD. In fact, as the chief Cabinet secretary in 2003, he issued a *danwa* under his name to announce that BMD did not violate CSD and the ban on arms export in 2003. His administration did not even last for a year, during which there was corruption in the midst of upgrading the DA to a ministerial level and scandal in the SDF's mission (Asahi Shimbun, 2007c, 2007g).

Aso, as a successor to Fukuda, had long been involved in the Cabinet decision-making as the minister of foreign affairs in both the Koizumi and Abe administrations. In comparison with Fukuda, he was keen on lifting the ban on arms export (Asahi Shimbun, 2009b).

Domestic political structure: Part of domestic institutions

Japanese politics until 1993 had always been labelled as one-party dominance or a quasi-two-party system—known as 'the 1955 system' (Kitaoka, 2008). Holding the seat of the ruling party for 38 consecutive years, the dominance of the LDP was prominent. However, it did not mean the LDP always held sway in every policy, particularly security. The reason for this was not just the strong public sentiment of anti-militarism but the LDP's non-ideological flexibility to absorb opposition parties' policy and the

very existence of parties that echoed with such a view, most notably the Socialist Party (Pempel, 1982). The two parties had long represented two ideological camps in a unique way: the opposition of the Socialist Party was reflected in the LDP's policies.

The virtual disappearance of the Socialist Party and its ultimate acknowledgement of the SDF as constitutionally legitimate, together with the LDP stepping down as an opposition party, led to the transformation of domestic politics (Kitaoka, 2008). First, the DPJ emerged as a major opposition party with the potential to be the ruling party after several mergers of minor parties. The DPJ holds a comparatively similar view on security policy, such as the promotion of BMD, because Ichiro Ozawa, who was known for a strong connection with defence industry with his influence and normalist view, left the LDP and helped form the DPJ with some *kokubō-zoku* such as Hideaki Tamura (Noda and Tanaka, 2009). Therefore, the DPJ, despite its de facto conglomerate of different ideologies, favoured BMD. Second, the LDP, because of its inability to single-handedly collect enough votes to be the ruling party, formed a coalition with the Komeito, whose security view was almost opposite that of the LDP. The Komeito placed a strong emphasis on maintaining the current constitution and was against remilitarisation; it was a potential veto player despite its rather small size as a party. Accordingly, the newly emerged structure of domestic politics was two major parties sharing a similar view whilst the small opposition integrated into the coalition. As of 2005, for instance, the LDP and the DPJ held 409 (296 and 113, respectively) seats out of 480 in the Lower House. The third was the Komeito with only 31 seats, albeit as a coalition partner.

Although the Komeito with its party's principle—the stance was even originally against the US-Japan security treaty in the 1960s—could be a potential veto player, no evidence suggests the Komeito was actively involved in the decision-making process for BMD and the Cabinet decision to deploy BMD at the time of research. This arguably stems from the fact that usually one to two Cabinet members are selected from the Komeito, though not in the ministerial position for the MOFA or the DA. Under the Koizumi administration, one from the Komeito took the position of the minister of health, labour and welfare. Often, the president of the Komeito represents the party to raise concerns about the LDP-led security policy, such as the ban on arms export and constitutional revision (Asahi Shimbun, 2007n) . However, the Komeito succumbed relatively easily to the LDP's decision and admitted the exceptional treatment of technological transfer to the US in the case of BMD (Asahi Shimbun, 2004q). As with other opposition parties,

the Komeito did not accept every suggestion or plan that surfaced. Although complete denial was not seen, it always raised concerns and urged the need to discuss more deeply areas such as counter-strike capability and the CSD (Asahi Shimbun, 2006h).

State-society relations: The inflated perception of threat in the public and the constant pursuit of vested interests

The variable of state-society relations—consisting of the public response and economic actors' involvement in BMD-related policy-making—shows the inflated perception of threats that facilitates BMD development. This was accelerated by the efforts made by the actors such as Keidanren and related defence industry. The poll and survey described below suggest an interesting picture of public perception and how the discourse of an exclusively defence-oriented policy keeps the public at bay.

In 2005, the Asahi poll (1,782 answers) suggested that 56% were 'largely concerned' and 36% were a little concerned about North Korean nuclear development, whilst 67% considered BMD necessary (Asahi Shimbun, 2005a). The poll went so far as to ask whether a member of the SDF should appropriately be able to address missiles, and not the prime minister (the erosion of civilian control), and 50% were in favour of this idea. For the sake of political neutrality, a look at other newspapers suggests similar results. *Yomiuri Shimbun* (2004b) also conducted a poll (3,000 answers) in the same year, the result of which was 69% found it more or less 'appropriate' to deploy BMD against North Korean missile launches. The Nikkei survey suggests that 45% were in favour of the current BMD system, whilst 26% thought BMD should be equipped with counter-strike capabilities (Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 2006).

Interestingly, in the issue of the CSD, the poll shows overall opposition to it: 44% were against CSD, whilst only 28% were in favour (Asahi Shimbun, 2004d). On the other hand, no poll was conducted on institutional constraints on BMD, such as the ban on arms export and the use of space for military purposes. This perhaps reflects the lack of public interest, which may stem from the technicality of the area itself and the potential difficulty in connecting them with the overarching theme of militarisation. Overall, like the Komeito, the public shows a propensity to largely acknowledge BMD as an effective means to enhance Japan's defence capability as long as it sticks to a loosely defined, publicly evaluated stance of 'an exclusively defence-oriented policy' that arguably eliminates CSD and counter-strike capability.

Economic groups in relation to BMD, such as the defence industry, are in general keen on BMD on the conditions that it benefits them. Thus, what they pursue is not mere development in BMD but the qualitative and quantitative improvement in BMD in the way in which there is a business opportunity. This is why the actors with vested interests advocate the ban on the export of arms by band-wagoning the discussion surrounding BMD, even though the lift on the restriction creates fruitful opportunities in other areas, such as international co-operation and arms export to other countries besides the US. Under the banner of *kokusanka* ('indigenous defence industry'), actors such as Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Keidanren did not welcome the idea of purchasing equipment from the US (Samuels, 1994). The same goes for counter-strike capabilities, as cruise missiles could be developed by the domestic defence industry; in particular, the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries has been responsible for similar missiles SSM-1B (Sankei Shimbun, 2017a). In the area of space, the Society of Japanese Aerospace Companies (SJAC) and Keidanren was passionate to expand the latter's area to military use with the view to enhancing business. The defence industry also saw space exploration as an opportunity because Mitsubishi Heavy Industries is responsible for the production of the rocket engine.

Keidanren was known as a strong lobbying group for the ban on arms export; a restriction on export makes the defence industry only benefit in the domestic market, which has the DA as the sole 'customer' (Sasaki, 2016). It attempted lobbying to lift the ban on arms export together with *kokubō-zoku*'s backup in 1995 when the idea of TMD came up with the US, which obviously did not materialise (Asahi Shimbun, 1995a). The logic of promoting to loosen the restriction was the same for the shrinking defence industry and technologically left behind with the lack of international competitiveness—the same logic for liberalisation of the Japanese domestic market in the 1990s. However, there is an apparent incompatibility with Japan's security policy stance as concerns arise with an 'arms race' and indirect support to countries engaged in conflicts and wars. Therefore, BMD is a window of opportunity for Keidanren to lobby because Japan already participated in joint R&D, which eliminated one hurdle for the lift of the ban on the export of arms (Noda, 2005). In 2004, Keidanren submitted a proposal to the Cabinet and attended LDP's executive meeting to directly appeal, together with the resurgence of a political donation to the LDP although the donation ceased ten years ago. Keidanren went so far to advocate the taboo area—constitutional revision—for the first time in its history (Asahi Shimbun, 2005m). Such constant efforts

are fairly understandable given that the chair of the committee of the defence industry in Keidanren consistently has come from the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (Sataka, 2008).

As discussed before, politicians (*kokubō-zoku*) and bureaucrats in the DA represent these economic groups because of the corrupted relationship, such as *settai* (hosting guests with dinner or golf) and *amakudari* (retired officials landing jobs in the private sector; (M. Noda & Tanaka, 2009). In fact, there was a purported *settai* in one of the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries' properties to gather *kokubō-zoku* in 2004 (M. Noda, 2005). Accordingly, despite the more expensive costs of producing PAC3 in Japan rather than buying it from the US, the government signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for licence production (Asahi Shimbun, 2005j), which Kyuma might have led by negotiation.

There is a further added joint research/development project—a sea-based missile that is to be equipped with Aegis destroyers (Asahi Shimbun, 2005i). As Samuels (1994) reveals through interviews with the officials from the Bureau of Equipment Acquisition, the general principle of acquisition of military equipment starts with the survey as to whether there are Japanese firms technologically capable of producing parts and if not, they start an investigation whether such parts can be domestically developed and produced. Furthermore, if it is not plausible, the bureau starts contacting Japanese trading companies that can bring 'license production' and then looks for imports (Friedman & Samuels, 1993). For instance, PAC-3 is a quintessential example where initial technological transfer from the US led to virtually the complete domestic production (Friedman & Samuels, 1993). The potential return from producing PAC-3 domestically is approximately 100–300 billion yen (Sataka, 2008). It is quite natural that the DA decided to use PAC-3 missiles as part of BMD system and not the Kinetic Energy Interceptor and Multiple Kill Vehicle, in which the US invested for more than 30 years (Hildreth, 2007). As if representing their interests, Moriya, then-vice administrative minister, stated that he was utterly surprised that PAC-3 was initially based on FMS, and he aimed to continue to negotiate with the US to settle with license production (Asahi Shimbun, 2004t).

Erosion and resistance of institutionalised forms of anti-militarism: Domestic institutions

As with one of the central themes of this chapter—legal rearrangement surrounding the

institutionalised form of anti-militarism—there was a substantial degree of erosion. This includes the loosening of civilian control, the enactment of the space law that allows for the use of space for security purposes, the exceptions on the ban on arms export in the case of BMD and the signing of several General Security of Military Information Agreements (GSOMIAs) (Asahi Shimbun, 2007h). Seemingly, one can assume anti-militarism has faded so much so that Japan has departed largely from the conventional security posture of the Yoshida Doctrine; however, this view is not necessarily true. Despite leaders' consensus and the public acceptance of BMD together with the more radical pursuit of this area by the DA and economic groups, some, and yet most, central pieces constituting anti-militarism have remained: the CSD and the ban on arms export.

Whilst much of them are related to BMD posture, what distinguishes those that changed and those that remained is the 'comprehensibility' of each. In other words, the more implications the change in domestic institutions might have, the more difficult it could be to materialise. As discussed later in more detail, for example, the civilian control and the basic use of space for security purposes are arguably prerequisite conditions in BMD because deployment requires quick decision-making and monitoring requires satellites (Swaine *et al*, 2001). On the other hand, the ban on the export of arms is useful but not an absolute necessity in terms of co-operation and technological transfer to countries besides the US. The key variable of this chasm is arguably political stability with leaders' dilemma between political legitimacy and strategic culture under the strategic environment in which Japan is situated.

Civilian control

As of 2004, civilian control was a hindrance to the actual deployment of BMD. Addressing missiles is a use of force and therefore the Cabinet approval which is requested by the Chief of the DA. As pointed by experts, if North Korea launches a missile towards Japan, then it is estimated to take approximately 10 minutes to reach Japan (T. Morimoto, 2002). The current procedure to maintain tight civilian control is not enough to secure timely action to conduct operations to address the missiles. Therefore, the revision of the SDF law is more or less a prerequisite.

It is natural that none of the political parties explicitly opposed the idea of revision, which led to the discussion of how to maintain civilian control in the BMD operation.

The initial idea put forward by the LDP and the DA concerned the way in which the prime minister gave prior approval to the SDF official with the strict adherence to the two patterns and procedures prepared in advance. First, in case there is a sign that a missile will be launched to attack Japan, the chief of the DA requests the prime minister to approve it before such attacks. The second is that when a surprise attack occurs, with the Guidelines for Emergency Response, the authority to address missiles is left to the SDF (Asahi Shimbun, 2005b); however, at this point, the details of the Guidelines were not to be included in the bill to enact the relevant law but are dealt with ‘government decree’ (Asahi Shimbun, 2005k). This means that how civilian control is maintained is unclear in the case of addressing surprise attacks. Moreover, the bill does not require an ex post facto announcement in the Diet, which is arguably to maintain ‘secrecy’ in BMD.

There are a couple of suggestions to amend during the Diet debate, which did not materialise except for a coalition partner’s request for the ex post facto announcement. The DPJ advocated the need for ex ante facto approval. This is obviously not desirable by the DA or the LDP, which pursues BMD as the decision to address missiles—if that happens—and whether it is justifiable (Asahi Shimbun, 2005b). This was not even negotiated; in the end, only the Komeito’s request as an intra-coalition adjustment is included in the final draft of the bill—an ex post facto announcement in case of surprise attacks. The Diet debate focuses on which relevant laws to revise—be it police or the SDF—for addressing missile attacks to minimise potential damages to civilians (House of Representatives, 2005a). It is interesting to note that at this point—two years after the Cabinet’s decision to deploy BMD—there has been no discussion as to the importance/necessity of BMD. Regarding civilian control, arguably the conditions of exercising individual self-defence—no other means available, attack with the possibility to threaten Japan’s survival and restricted use of force to a minimum degree—are met in the case of BMD. The justification of BMD and not violating the CSD was largely accepted. The loosening of civilian control did not face a significant hindrance such as the constitution.

General Security of Military Information Agreement

One of the US’s concerns regarding joint deployment of BMD was the treatment of militarily classified information, which was further enlarged by the leak of Aegis destroyers-related information by the SDF member in 2006 (Asahi Shimbun, 2007p).

Japan did not have an established intelligence organisation without a set of legal frameworks on how to handle classified information. In the case of another leak of the DA's information through file-sharing software, the approach was to ask not to use such a thing without any actual solutions (Asahi Shimbun, 2006o). For deeply concerned leaders and bureaucrats, such a scandal would jeopardise the US-Japan security alliance.

It, therefore, was Japan that initiated the actual discussion on GSOMIA, particularly Abe, the then-prime minister, who was keen on materialising protection of classified information to establishing a Japanese version of the US NSC. GSOMIA is an agreement between two countries, the decision-making of which is not subject to Diet debate or the law-making process. As acknowledged by MOFA officials, given the fact that enactment of the secrecy law might take time with potential public aversion, with the urgent need to materialise to protect information, GSOMIA was chosen as the means (Asahi Shimbun, 2006i). Accordingly, the agreement was signed in the summer of 2007.

Practical problems are solved with this agreement. There was an alleged report that the US stopped providing parts with classified information on SM3 with Japan after the incident of the SDF member's leak of Aegis destroyers (Asahi Shimbun, 2007h). Nevertheless, there seems to be another reason to choose GSOMIA. In essence, an MOU was possible, and it can be applied case by case. In each BMD research project, information is classified to a specific party. Furthermore, it would also be possible to strengthen the Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement as one example. In the case of BMD, the information regarding BMD-related equipment is classified to the government, the DA and relevant firms.

GSOMIA is more comprehensive and includes strict adherence to information from not only both governments but also private companies. The scope of information is substantially wider, ranging from a military operation to military technology. This brings about benefits to the defence industry (Asahi Shimbun, 2006i) because it not only enables more comprehensive participation of Japanese companies in BMD development but also allows Japanese private firms to fix US military equipment through information sharing. Until then, the US military equipment had to be transferred back to the US for repair. It is also interesting to note that Kyuma—the then-chief of the DA who was also known for his strong connection with the defence industry—was an advocate and actively involved in the negotiation with the US on the issue of the 2+2 meeting with the US, suggestive of the shadow of vested interests

(Yomiuri Shimbun, 2007c).

Basic Space Law

As of 2008, the use of space was limited to ‘peaceful use’ as a Diet resolution, which meant the ‘non-military’ use of space (House of Representatives, 2006). However, in the 1980s, after the Diet discussion as to whether the SDF could use satellite information, the Diet resolution was reinterpreted in the way in which general satellites and their information could be used by the SDF, with which the so-called spy satellites were launched in the form of information gathering satellites. Despite the absence of discussion in the Diet, it took three years to enact as law since 2005. This is because the LDP decided to submit the relevant bill in the form of legislation by House members. There were virtually no bureaucrats who could be solely responsible for drafting a law for space exploration, including military use (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2007c).

The LDP first organised a committee—the Committee of National Space Strategy in 2005—under the Koizumi administration, which subsequently turned into a special committee of space exploration. It took a year to draft a plan that was apparently opposed by the coalition partner, the Komeito, regarding the interpretation of ‘peaceful use for space’ in 2006. The Komeito requested the LDP to specify the definition of space use for military purposes more clearly and include the denial of possession of any military weaponry in space (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2007g). In the end, the Komeito’s view was included in the final draft to a degree in that the use of space is limited to the launch of satellites for military purposes (Cabinet Office, 2008c).

It was mid-2007 when both parties agreed on the draft. Due to the upcoming general election in the summer of 2007, the bill was supposed to be submitted in the fall; this, however, faced a significant challenge because of the sudden resignation of Abe as prime minister and the resultant Cabinet shuffle. With the weakened LDP, the DPJ saw the sluggish process of the Basic Space Law as an opportunity to take the lead to become the ruling party. The DPJ itself pushed forward a more or less similar proposal of the law with one difference: a proposal to establish the Ministry of Space (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2007e). The involvement of the DPJ prolonged the process, but eventually, the three parties agreed on a draft the coalition initially put forward in 2008.

Given the three parties had 440 seats out of 480 in the Lower House (296 for the LDP,

31 for the Komeito and 113 for the DPJ), the submitted bill was enacted smoothly as the Basic Space Law. In this case, again, the economic groups would receive a large benefit from the enactment of the Basic Space Law (M. Noda & Tanaka, 2009).

First, the resolution of the ideal military satellite was far more precise than the generally used satellite, such as GPS, which suggests the defence industry took up the role of developing and selling, now that developing spy satellites was justified (Asahi Shimbun, 2007u). Second, as such technology was held by the defence industry, launching and the relevant procedure of controlling spy satellites also was conducted by the defence industry. For example, the JAXA buys the ‘service’ of launching satellites provided by the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries; one launch appeared to cost 10 billion yen (M. Noda & Tanaka, 2009).

The way in which such vested interests are represented can be seen by examining the necessity of enacting the Basic Space Law in light of BMD. BMD is an integrated system with the US, and satellite information can be obtained by the US now that the GSOMIA was enacted, allowing a smooth information sharing. The cost of purchasing domestically developed military satellites is more expensive than buying from the US (M. Noda & Tanaka, 2009). As repeatedly lobbied by Keidanren and the SJAC, their appeal was based on the idea of *kokusanka*, the protection and development of the indigenous production as well as catching up with the emerging global space exploration and markets. This infers that the Basic Space Law serves many economic groups supported by *kokubō-zoku* and the Cabinet.

Ban on arms export

In the end, the LDP, together with the defence industry, failed to lift the ban on arms export between 2004 and 2009, in the period of concretising defensive realist-oriented grand strategy. This is despite the fact that the two large parties (the LDP and the DPJ) favoured BMD as an effective rationale and had strong support from the defence industry. It is one of the few remaining elements of the institutionalised form of anti-militarism.

A reason for the abortive attempt is not only unstable domestic politics but also the way in which the risk-aversion stance of the Cabinet hinders from changing this long-standing institutionalised form of anti-militarism. With the gradually growing

public acceptance of the US-Japan alliance, the way in which the US is treated in the ban on arms export was exceptional. In 1976, the ban on the export of arms was revised in the form of the Cabinet decision under the Miki administration to restrict the export to all the countries, whilst in 1983 under the Nakasone administration, the technological transfer to the US became an exception (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2004c). There was still a large step between technological transfer and export of military equipment because the public perception seemed to dictate that the lift of the ban on arms export might have direct contributions to actual conflicts in a third country through the transfer of physical weapons (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2004d).

The Cabinet therefore again pursued the partial ban on arms export with the US through the form of *danwa* (cabinet statement) at the end of 2004, which did not require a policy-making process. There was no institutional channel to override the decision by either the public or the opposition parties. In this case, the Cabinet made the most of the rationale for BMD as the only means to defend Japan, which sticks to the stance of and extremely defensive-oriented defence policy (Cabinet Office, 2004). Furthermore, the urgent need to prepare not to violate the ban on arms export made the Cabinet the safest option to pursue; otherwise, a planned deployment would not be feasible without the framework where US-Japan co-production and deployment were conducted.

Even in the process of issuing the *danwa*, the coalition partner the Komeito played a role in restricting the LDP's plan. The LDP's Committee of Security Policy initially planned to pursue the complete ban on arms export, with the same view of the defence industry and Keidanren (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2004a). However, even the Cabinet hesitated to follow the LDP's plan given the strong repercussions of Ishiba's statement—the chief of the DA—that the ban on arms export should be revised. The Cabinet changed the draft in a way in which only the area of BMD with the US-joint production should be possible with additional strict regulation that allows export to other countries that are not termed as 'terrorist nations' (Asahi Shimbun, 2004o). After the intra-coalition negotiation, the Komeito's view was reflected in the final draft: the arms export of co-produced BMD equipment to other countries by the US requires the 'prior approval of Japan' and no other direct export to other countries by Japan as a general principle (Asahi Shimbun, 2004q). This led to the issuance of the *danwa* in 2004.

It is interesting to note there is another reason a form of *danwa* was chosen. It would be

possible, and probably further enhanced if the Cabinet decided to include the new ban on arms export in the NDPG, which is renewed every five years. Kyuma apparently came up with the idea of a *danwa* because the inclusion in the Guidelines fixes the renewed ban on the export of arms for the next five years so that an immediate lift on the ban would be more difficult (Asahi Shimbun, 2004b). This suggests the new ban is considered an ad hoc decision with future attempt to lift it further. The further attempt was seen subsequently, which, however, cannot necessarily be related to BMD as the Cabinet already used it to construct the acceptable logic.

What changed is another exception of exporting military equipment—cruise ships—in the form of ODA to Indonesia (Asahi Shimbun, 2006d), in particular, Kyuma as the chief of the DA between 2006 and 2007, who actively advocated the need to further lift the ban on arms export on an economic interests basis. He argues that the repair of the US military equipment—besides BMD-related ones—in Japan is necessary, enlarging the areas of allowance on arms export to the US (Asahi Shimbun, 2006c). The LDP and the defence industry put forward the necessity of the lift to avoid being technologically left behind (Asahi Shimbun, 2009d).

Nevertheless, these are not convincing enough to challenge the institutionalised form of anti-militarism. In the end, it seems that the ban on the export of arms goes beyond the need of the grand strategy of a defensive realist-oriented one.

Completion of deployment

The initial deployment plan issued in 2004 through the mid-term defence plan states that by 2011, four Aegis destroyers with BMD system, 16 units with PAC-3 missiles and seven fixed position radars (FPS) would be deployed to function as Japan's BMD system with US military integrated deployment (Defense Agency, 2004a, 2004b). Once the BMD was chosen to be introduced in 2004, there largely was autonomy in how to improve and deploy, as well as its speed of development as long as the budget allowed.

One potential hindrance is the negotiation with the locals to deploy BMD-related military equipment. However, as the case of Aegis destroyers deployment in Niigata shows, there was not much opposition from the areas where Aegis destroyers are to be deployed (Asahi Shimbun, 2004a). Therefore, relatively smooth deployment was seen. The first PAC-3 was deployed in Saitama to protect Tokyo in 2006 (Asahi Shimbun,

2005l) followed by deployment in Kanagawa, Chiba and Ibaragi—all in the Kanto region. The deployment continues to cover each region.

The deployment phase shows the struggle between ideal, early deployment and parochial interests. SM-3 missiles were co-developed, and the PAC-3 was to be domestically developed by the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (Asahi Shimbun, 2003i). However, due to the urgent need to deploy BMD, the DA decided first to introduce them through foreign military sales (FMS) from the US-Japan already acquired Aegis destroyers, but these were not equipped with BMD system (i.e. system integration to transmit the information from radars and capabilities to launch SM-3 missiles). Therefore, these need repair and improvements. Due to the budget restriction—each repair might cost 27 billion yen—the plan was revised to develop one Aegis destroyer for each year since 2007 (Hughes, 2007). In the end, the plan was accelerated. By 2010, a year earlier than expected, four Aegis destroyers with BMD systems and PAC-3 missiles were deployed accordingly with the integrated system for information gathering. In theory, by 2010, Japan completed the initial phase of deployment with legal rearrangement to be able to address ballistic missile attacks.

The reflection of the strategic environment and the intervening variables

Since Japan decided to introduce BMD in 2004, the strategic environment surrounding Japan has arguably been more ‘restrictive’ because North Korea is a recognised threat. North Korea shows hostility to harm the US with intimidation through missile tests and launches after the US conducted joint military training (Asahi Shimbun, 2003c). In 2004, it was already reported that North Korea had developed a submarine-launched ballistic missile (Asahi Shimbun, 2004l) ICBM (Asahi Shimbun, 2004k) that could reach Japan and the US. Although there is not an established way to measure imminence, North Korea threw away the diplomatic dialogue for negotiation in 2005 by announcing the indefinite postponement of participating in the six-party talks with official recognition of possessing nuclear weapons (Asahi Shimbun, 2005g)

The strategic environment incentivised Japan to balance against North Korea as a threat—the means of which is constructed by the key strategic culture—with its US ally, partially constituting leaders’ image as one intervening variable. The US initially proposed an overarching missile defence system and requested Japan to join. Leaders of bureaucracies, such as the MOFA and the DA, were keen on pursuing BMD. Politically

elected leaders came to terms with the necessity of BMD that stems from the information asymmetry in terms of BMD (e.g. the information asymmetry between the prime minister, and *kokubō-zoku* as well as bureaucrats). This shared view on BMD as a valid strategic option is suitably reflected in the nascent transformation of domestic politics: the emerging political axis between the LDP and the DPJ, both of which favour of BMD with more than two-thirds of seats in the Diet (Asahi Shimbun, 2003e).

Turning to the variable of state-society relations, for the sake of ‘extremely defence-oriented policy’, BMD was effectively supported by the public through the fear of North Korea ingrained in the fabric of society in the 2000s. This public acceptance through the absence of ‘social norm of anti-militarism’ gave the green light to the leaders to pursue BMD (Asahi Shimbun, 2005a). Moreover, the efforts made by the economic groups mostly paid off in the elimination of some of the long-standing institutional barriers, such as the space use and the exception of the ban of arms export. For economic actors, they pursued the way that reflected their interests. Therefore, BMD deployment often brought financial benefits, such as co-production and GSOMIA, which enables the defence industry to take on the role of repairing the US military equipment (Asahi Shimbun, 2006i). However, there is a dilemma between the protection of indigenous production capabilities and strategic needs. In the end, to promptly respond to the strategic environment, Japan first introduced the system from the US through FMS because it could take less time to deploy. Even though vested interests made a substantial contribution to the development of BMD, strategic needs overrode them for swift deployment.

The institutionalised form of anti-militarism—domestic institutions as a key intervening variable—that has long played a role in delimiting Japan’s security capacity underwent a substantial change in the process of BMD development. Joint research and production, together with its export, were officially allowed for future sophistication and upgrade in the defence system in Japan. The newly enacted Basic Space Law allowed Japan to participate in the new dimension—space—in security policy (Hughes, 2013). These institutional changes show a sign of significant integration of the US-Japan military. The GSOMIA with the US enabled Japan to treat and fix the US military equipment in Japan whilst sharing classified information.

In the end, the strategic environment’s influence was mitigated by intervening variables, the interaction of which led to the progressive grand strategic shift to a defensive

realist-oriented one. Only the examination of intervening variables allows us to reveal the nuanced view on Japan's security policy development and the degree to which the so-called antimilitarism matters vis-à-vis policymakers and other relevant actors, as illustrated by the strategic environment.

6.3 Continuity of Defensive Realist Grand Strategy of Ballistic Missile Defence Between 2009 and 2012

With the aggravating strategic environment, the analysis of the period between 2009 and 2012 theoretically would have seen a substantial improvement in BMD as the strategic environment became more restrictive. In actuality, there was a particularly stagnated process. One could go as far as to say that Japan in this period failed to respond to the strategic environment. North Korean missile and nuclear tests were aggravated, with missile and nuclear experiments in 2009 and further missile tests twice in 2012 (Jungmin, 2013). Sino-Japanese relations arguably culminated in a severe diplomatic chasm through intensified territorial disputes, characterised by the boat collision incident with Japan's detention of the Chinese skipper in 2010 and Japan's purchase of the islands, the heart of the disputes (Howe & Campbell, 2013). Following the rise of China with its GDP surpassing that of Japan in 2012, China was recognised for the first time as a threat in the annual defence white paper.

Examining domestic politics, a regime change took place through a landslide victory of 308 seats, the largest number of seats with the largest voter turnout for one party in post-war politics. The DPJ proposed a rather radical view on the US-Japan alliance, distancing itself from the US to be an 'equal' partner (Lipsky & Scheiner, 2012). From realist perspectives, this suggests that, with less support from the US to cope with a newly recognised threat of China and the worsening threat of North Korea, Japan would need to drastically upgrade its defence strategy and revolutionise its security posture, which would have enormous impacts on BMD. Such an expectation was immediately evaporated within a year through the change in the prime minister and so was the subsequent Cabinet's strategy. This chapter discusses that whilst the changing strategic environment resulted in some updates to the US alliance, the intervening variables played a crucial role in explaining the stagnated progress to hold the grand strategy based on defensive realism.

Shifting Domestic Institutions as a Policy-making Process

The regime change instigated the alternation of the very core structure in terms of policy-making process: the power concentration of the Cabinet with the exclusion of bureaucrats as manifested in the DPJ's slogan for 'politician-led politics'. As promised in the manifesto of the DPJ, one of the significant changes that materialised under the newly established Hatoyama administration was the decision-making process. A 'three political appointees' conference was established to plan and co-ordinate policies, with the prime minister, the minister and deputy minister in charge of decision-making (Shinoda, 2013). The DPJ also ceased the administrative vice-ministerial meeting where prior policy co-ordination (*nemawashi*) took place. This was seen as a symbol of the bureaucracy's supremacy within the government—virtually all administrative policy decisions needed the meeting's approval before submission to the Cabinet under the LDP (Ito and Miyamoto, 2014). Furthermore, the ministers were in charge of nominating the vice-ministers to facilitate smooth co-operation, not as a representation of different factions (Nagatsuma, 2011). This reform was the long-advocated objective of the DPJ since its birth. Consequently, there was a strong uniformity in terms of this policy orientation, especially in the core executive members of the DPJ, such as Kan, Hatoyama, Ozawa and Sengoku (Abiru, 2011; Kan, 2009)

This was followed by 'Basic Policies' as stated by Hatoyama (2009), which made a clear separation between politicians and bureaucrats in terms of their respective roles in policy-making. A document was issued by the Hatoyama Cabinet regulating the rights of bureaucrats, ranging from a virtual prohibition on bureaucrats holding press conferences to inter-ministerial communication without permission from superiors (Shimizu, 2011). This suggests there was virtually no direct influence of bureaucrats on policy-making or at least policy planning. Their task is like other countries' bureaucrats, the execution and implementation of policy initiatives ordered by the Cabinet.

To further enhance the centralisation of decision-making in the hands of the Cabinet, the Policy Affairs Research Council subcommittees were done away with, as initiated by Ichiro Ozawa. However, Hatoyama appears to have agreed with the plan despite strong opposition from Kan and some of the members (Yamaguchi & Nakakita, 2014). These subcommittees served as actual decision-making organs. Under the Hatoyama government, the requests and suggestions from the DPJ members would be delivered through political appointees to the minister. The Basic Policy materialised by Hatoyama

states that the decision of the government would be made by the Cabinet, not by the party (Machidori, 2015). This suggests a weakened power of *kokubō-zoku* as they can no longer have as much influence over policy-making as before. Moreover, a type of research council of national security, which was seen under the LDP with direct influence on policy orientation, no longer exists. As discussed in the theoretical framework, the examination of the policy-making structure as a part of domestic institutions reveals the leaders who are responsible for policy-making. In the case of the DPJ, the influence of bureaucrats—inter alia the MOFA and MOD—were largely diminished.

Another important perspective in the variable of domestic institutions is the political situation in the period that is called a twisted Diet. Although the 2009 general election led to the DPJ holding the majority in both houses because it won the Upper House election in 2007, the loss of the Upper House election in 2010 resulted in a twisted Diet (Shinoda, 2012). The further problem is that, unlike the twisted Diet under the Fukuda administration in 2007, the coalition did not hold two-thirds of the Lower House. This created a situation where the superiority of the Lower House did not apply. Even if the submitted bill was rejected in the Upper House, it could be overridden in the Lower House by holding more than two-thirds of the seats.

Within a year of the premiership of the DPJ, the DPJ faced one of the most severe challenges to pass the bill, the situation of which is dubbed cynically with *kimerarenai seiji* ('partisan gridlock') (Lipsy & Scheiner, 2012). As will be discussed in more detail later, the DPJ-led coalition could not materialise any of BMD-related bills and it could at most issue a Cabinet decision to slightly influence the restrictions on Japan's security policy such as the ban on arms export, which does not require a policy-making process with the majority in the diet.

State-society Relations (Absence of Keidanren and *Kokubō-zoku*)

Unlike the LDP-led Cabinet where *kokubō-zoku* has long bridged the channel between such economic groups as Keidanren, the defence industry and politicians and bureaucrats since WWII, the DPJ did not have connection and structure due to a lack of experience (Hiroshi, 2009; Howe & Campbell, 2013). The difficulty of establishing an effective connection lies in the two policy principles that arguably led it to a landslide victory.

The first is Cabinet-led politics where the co-ordination between bureaucrats and politician were completely disconnected. Therefore, the conventional quasi-iron triangle—bureaucrats, *kokubō-zoku* and the defence industry—became dysfunctional. Policy initiatives came from the coalition parties to the minister where the decision is handed down to the bureaucrats in a top-down manner (Yamaguchi & Nakakita, 2014). Although this arguably sounds like an ideal political organisational structure, in the case of Japan, the expertise of each policy area has long been largely held by bureaucrats. They have played a critical role in Japanese politics through the position of vice administrative minister, which was abolished under the DPJ (Shinoda, 2013).

The popularity of this policy stance comes from the successive scandals by bureaucrats (Yamaguchi & Nakakita, 2014). In case of the MOD, under the LDP, there was the mishandling of US classified information and the accidental leak of the DA's information, together with substantial corruption between the defence industry and the DA officials. The second, under the name of 'the stop wasting taxpayers' money', the DPJ banned political donations from private firms and Keidanren, which it saw as a representation of vested interests; hence, it was a waste from the public perspective (DPJ, 2009). On the other hand, this is how the LDP established the channel with economic groups, and both have been considered to go hand-in-hand.

Despite Keidanren's attempt to organise several meetings with DPJ officials, they did not find a way to reconcile the differences in policy orientation (Asahi Shimbun, 2009h). The lack of connection is arguably most represented in the members of the prime minister advisory board without any member from Keidanren. Under the LDP, at least one member is chosen from Keidanren (Asahi Shimbun, 2010r). However, it does not mean that Keidanren gave up on the long-standing objective of lifting the ban on arms export. Keidanren again lobbied for policy change for the domestic industry; on this occasion, this was not the direct proposal to the ruling party but the statement to advocate (Asahi Shimbun, 2010f).

Budget reduction: Bureaucrats vs the Cabinet

The MOD faced a severe challenge to further upgrade BMD due to the ever-more restrictive budget allocation despite the aggravating strategic environment. Based on the DPJ's principle of cutting 'waste of money' for taxpayers' money—known as

jigyoshiwake ('budget screening')—the defence budget was one of the main targets (A. Ito, 2009). This created a different structure from the one between bureaucrats and the LDP with close co-ordination. It has been the job of the Ministry of Finance to restrict and control the budget. However, now that the Cabinet became responsible for the task, there emerged a conflicting structure between the MOD and the Cabinet as well as the Ministry of Finance. The budget screening targets the host-nation support to the US bases in Japan, which plays a crucial role in maintaining the US-Japan security alliance. Kitazawa, the then minister of defence, who arguably has the closest view amongst the DPJ members, opposed it (Asahi Shimbun, 2009l). The budget had been decided through negotiations between the US and MOD and the budget screening suddenly weighed in the co-ordination in a rather arbitrary way. The demand from the MOD to increase the number of SDF members was rejected because the screening budget committee claimed the need for an increase was unclear (Asahi Shimbun, 2009g).

This firmly entrenched stance of reduction took its toll on the defence budget. In particular, the defence budget saw a constant decline for seven consecutive years since 2002 (Asahi Shimbun, 2010c). Even additional purchases of PAC-3, a critical part of the BMD system, were apparently questioned within the DPJ (Asahi Shimbun, 2010c). The conflicting relationship was intensified by the Cabinet's attempt to dissolve the Airport Environment Improvement as a public welfare corporation and turn it into a foundation, which was the place for *amakudari* for the MOD officials (Asahi Shimbun, 2010p).

One MOD official stated that the ministry fought the Cabinet to secure enough budget (Asahi Shimbun, 2010h). As the Cabinet created an intra-ministry contest to allocate an additional 1 trillion yen, the MOD attempted to secure the already-reduced budget of host-nation support from the allocation to make up for (Asahi Shimbun, 2010n). Kitazawa was arguably one exceptional figure who tried to connect the deep chasm between the Cabinet and the MOD; he showed clear dissatisfaction with the reduction of the defence budget (Asahi Shimbun, 2010b) and pushed for the idea of allocating the host nation support to the contest (Asahi Shimbun, 2010o). Furthermore, following the 3.11 earthquake, the Cabinet offered a 'Great East Japan Earthquake Recovery Special budget where the MOD managed to squeeze the budget to acquire military equipment that is compatible with disaster relief, such as C-2 military transport aircraft (Asahi Shimbun, 2012l). With these situations, the MOD could at most maintain the budget allocation to maintain the status quo. This suggests there is a severe difficulty pursuing substantial improvement in BMD, at least quantitatively.

Domestic institutions: The ban on arms export

One notable exception in terms of the change in the institutionalised form of anti-militarism in this period is the further lift of the ban on arms export where not only BMD could be potentially further developed but also the economic interests of the defence industry would receive benefits. Although no evidence suggests that Kitazawa has corrupted relations with the MOD or the defence industry, he played a crucial role in this institutional change. He was the first one in the Cabinet who referenced the need to review the current ban on the export of arms (Asahi Shimbun, 2010e), which was later denied by Hatoyama as a representative voice of the Cabinet with severe criticism from the SDP (Asahi Shimbun, 2010j). Since the SDP's firm stance against it with its principles, no further actions occurred until it dissolved the coalition partnership.

After the Hatomaya administration's blunder to relocate the Futenma US military bases, the following Kan administration was urged to restructure the US security relationship, which facilitated the discussion of the ban on the export of arms as the US has long requested to loosen it. Kitazawa participated in the MOD-led 'meeting to exchange views between the defence minister and the defence industry' in 2010, where all the major defence-related economic groups participated, including Keidanren, the Japan Association of Defence Industry (JADI), SJAC and the Shipbuilders' Association of Japan (SAJ) (Suzuki, 2010).

Without the prime minister, Kitazawa organised a private meeting with Maehara (*kokubō-zoku*), Noda (conservative politician and later prime minister) and the chief Cabinet secretary and reached an agreement to revise the ban on arms export (Asahi Shimbun, 2010a). Furthermore, Kitazawa, due to the concerns of the lack of the prime minister's involvement, added another secretary to the prime minister from the MOD to the existing six secretaries, ranging from Ministry of Finance to the MOFA. Until then, the official from the National Police Agency co-ordinated security (Asahi Shimbun, 2010d). Kitazawa and Maehara—responsible for a 2+2 meeting with the US counterparts—engaged in the negotiation of the revised plan on the ban on the export of arms (Asahi Shimbun, 2010i).

In the end, following Kan's resignation after accusations that he mishandled the nuclear power plant meltdown by the 3.11 earthquake, the Cabinet under the Noda administration decided to revise the ban on arms export at the end of 2011. The revised

ban enabled Japan to export arms to countries than the US that had a security relationship with Japan. This move expanded not only BMD but also military equipment that could be used for peacekeeping. Moreover, joint research and production became possible with 'allies' (Cabinet Office, 2011).

However, there was one critical drawback in BMD development because of the prolonged process of revising the ban on the export of arms, which took more than two years. This is the setback of the US-Japan joint development of BMD software, as the US decided to give up in the mid-2011 because Japan's ban on arms export did not allow the US to export the system if it was fully developed (Asahi Shimbun, 2010g). The system, named the Ballistic Missile Defence Open Architecture Research (BMDOAR) programme, would not only enhance missile interception capability but also provide a back-up when the existing system fails to function (Tanida, 2011). Although this case itself does not present significant jeopardy in the US-Japan BMD, the implication cannot be ignored. The US and Japan have been engaged in joint R&D as well as production in SM-3 and PAC-3 missiles. If the hindrance of the ban on the export of arms had continued to discourage the US to work with Japan, then Japan would have been isolated in BMD research and production. However, the revised ban on the export of arms would prevent such a worst-case scenario in Japan's BMD development.

Immediately after the relaxation of the export ban, the United Kingdom (UK) and Japan issued an official statement to start the joint development of defence-related equipment. Although at this stage, the joint development does not extend to BMD, the relaxation makes it technically possible to develop it jointly. A MOD official revealed to the media there were numerous requests for joint development from countries such as Italy, France and Australia (Asahi Shimbun, 2012k). Japan finally opened its door to countries other than the US for the trade of military equipment. This institutional change is an accomplishment for the defence industry with its constant lobbying.

Ongoing Qualitative Improvement

Political instability demonstrated that further institutional changes did not occur except for the export ban. One area that could see development is the qualitative improvement in BMD. As long as the budget allows, the MOD's plan for qualitative development is still possible. In particular, the budget screening organised by the Cabinet members who

do not seem to have extensive knowledge of BMD did not—or perhaps were unable to—evaluate the necessity of BMD to reduce the defence budget. Therefore, the attention and order of the budget screening were rather vague, such as the reduction of ‘host nation support’, which includes utility, welfare, labour and training relocation costs of the US military in Japan.

In the end, the MOD at least succeeded in securing the budget for improving BMD. The first item is to deploy PAC-3 all over Japan, and not just the main regions (Kanto, Kinki, Toukai and Kyushu), as well as Hokkaido, Aomori and Okinawa. (94.3 billion yen) (MoD, 2011). There was an additional improvement on the current PAC-2 radars with an update on the operating system. This is together with the sacrifice of the MOD’s rejected demand to increase the number of SDF members. Although the Hatoyama administration took a stance to distance itself from the US, the joint research project for SM-3 missiles that are to be equipped with Aegis destroyers remained intact (MoD, 2011). Furthermore, the MOD initiated new research on the BMD high power laser that could be used to address ballistic missiles.

In the following year, the MOD successfully managed to secure a budget for equipping two existing Atago-class Aegis destroyers with BMD systems so that Japan would possess six Aegis destroyers. According to a military journalist, at least two of them need to be deployed to cover Japan against missile attacks (Ota, 2009). Although it takes years to make these BMD-equipped Aegis destroyers, the qualitative improvement should be significant. Each Aegis destroyer requires a six-month inspection every four years and an annual 1–2-month inspection. To be fully operational all the time, the existing four Aegis destroyers with BMD system are insufficient (Sankei News, 2015). Although not necessarily related to BMD, given the rise of China, the MOD decided to invest more in developing Type 03 Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Missiles to address cruise missiles potentially coming from China during this period.

What is most interesting about the qualitative development of BMD is the clear indication of more integration with the US military and the implication of Japan’s future security posture. The planned two Aegis destroyers are to be equipped not only with a BMD system but also an updated BMD software (version 5.0) (Asahi Shimbun, 2010g). The new software has two key features. The first is ‘co-operative engagement capability’, which can share information spontaneously with other Aegis destroyers, such as the US ones. The existing version of the software is in general capable of

addressing missiles with its own radars. This technological development is predicated on the assumption that CSD would be allowed, making it possible for Japan to engage in BMD-related operations with the US (Kaneda, 2016).

The second is that the software is compatible with SM-3 Block IIA missiles that Japan and the US have jointly developed. The missile could address ICBMs designed and predicated on the assumption that North Korean missiles will be directed towards the US (Panda, 2017). Therefore, Japan's Aegis destroyers with this capability suggest it can address missiles in the boost phase, during which it is virtually impossible to predict where these go. Japan did not choose to adopt three phases of BMD system because addressing missiles in the boost phase with unknown targets violates CSD. Obviously, the MOD, according to the project plan on equipping Aegis destroyers with the upgraded BMD system, has not specified which version or even the name of the system (Defense Agency, 2004b). The MOD has been engaged in developing the BMD system despite political instability; it even went as far as to prepare for a further institutional shift, arguably the largest: CSD. Because the technical preparation of military equipment easily lasts for several years, the MOD went ahead in response to the aggravating strategic environment.

Reflection on the Strategic Environment and the Intervening Variables

As the changing strategic environment has moved towards a more restrictive one, Japan, in the end, saw moderate development in terms of BMD during the period between 2009 and 2012. The assumption that political instability is a key to explaining the slowed response was not necessarily true in comparison with the analysis of the previous period between 2006 and 2009 when three prime ministers served. The disconnect of bureaucrats and economic groups was mainly responsible in this period for failing to respond to the strategic environment. Although the ban on the export of arms was further relaxed, it was attributed to the role played by the defence minister who managed to deliver the interests in the Cabinet decision (Suzuki, 2010). This was at most what was possible to achieve with the pressure from the strategic environment, where BMD was decided to deploy in Europe as part of the NATO missile defence system.

Therefore, in terms of the defensive realist-oriented grand strategy, political stability is not necessarily sufficient to explain the slowed response to the strategic environment.

Political stability seemed necessary when Japan attempted to shift its grand strategy, such as in 2004 to deploy and develop BMD. The momentum of the decision to deploy BMD obviated the need for political stability to address the legal arrangement in the period between 2004 and 2008 (Hughes, 2013). After the initial legal development phase was finished, political instability may have been the key to explaining why Japan did not proceed to CSD: the need for a sufficient number of seats in the Diet and the substantial BMD development, such as counter-strike capability.

The reason for the lesser scale of strategic adjustment lies in the intervening variables. The regime change resulted in a policy-making shift—the domestic institutions—which by excluding bureaucrats narrowed the leaders (Hrebenar & Nakamura, 2015). Although the degree of influence of each leader might have increased at least in policy planning—in the case of Hatoyama for changing the direction of the US-Japan security relations—many leaders did not have a specific vision in security policy. This, in fact, helped to readjust and restore the previous security policy stance of the US ally within a year, along with the strategic environment, and partly explained the slowed response to the strategic environment. Nevertheless, the strategic culture that applies to leaders' image was not relevant because the vision of the prime minister was so ambiguous.

Another reason is the change in the domestic institution, resulting in the weakening bargaining power of bureaucrats and the economic groups—state-society relations (Shinoda, 2013). This weakening was due to the elimination of channels for lobbying and involvement in the policy-making process. Therefore, state-society relations have not played as crucial a role in recent years as they have done in pushing for the grand strategic shift up to 2009.

In summary, the domestic institutions—policy-making process and institutionalised form of anti-militarism—again played a crucial role in explaining Japan's BMD development in this period. The degree of influence of bureaucrats and the economic groups—state-society relations—substantially weakened due to the change in policy-making. In return, the variable of state-society relations was not as conspicuous as it had been previously. Instead, it seems that leaders' image and their relative influence were accentuated. The absence of clarity of leaders' image and policy plan did render such power meaningless.

Overall, the institutionalised form of anti-militarism, such as Article 9 or the ban on

arms export, as well as 1% ceiling of defence budget continued to exert its influence by delimiting Japan's security capacity. Ultimately, even though the strategic environment incentivised Japan to shift its grand strategy to an offensive realist one, the complex interplay of intervening variables mitigated its impact and resulted in the continued defensive realist-oriented grand strategy.

6.4 Towards an Offensive-realist Oriented Grand Strategy Between 2012 and 2018

The period between 2012 and 2018 saw outstanding political stability with the second inauguration of Abe. However, unlike his first premiership, his tactics with an emphasis on political stability to handle the dilemma between political legitimacy and strategic needs have thus far enabled him to maintain the premiership for more than five years. In comparison with the DPJ regime, the LDP—who closely co-ordinated with the MOD—facilitated the process of BMD development to be commensurate with the strategic environment that has had a crucial impact on Japan's response, together with the continuous rise of China and North Korean increasing missile launches.

The sign of a grand strategic shift seems to have occurred in 2015–2016, where further integration of the US military and the acquisition of counter-strike capability have been a real possibility. A consistent strong leaders' image along with the centralisation of power through the establishment of the NSC has always pushed for more upgrade of BMD—be it qualitatively or change in domestic institutions—the view of which has echoed with that of the MOD (Hughes, 2013). Despite the weakening link between Kokubo-zoku and economic groups/bureaucrats due to the consequence of political scandals and bribery in the late 2000s, the political stability of the Cabinet with leaders' image made their lobbying less important when it comes to BMD development. Although this shift is ongoing, it is likely that Japan will soon complete it, and an offensive realist prediction is most likely to apply to envision its future behaviour.

The Change in Domestic Institutions: Transition and Concentration of Power

Arguably the establishment of the (NSC) has had the most significant implications on Japan's subsequent security policy. Although the plan of establishing it was initiated by the first Abe administration and the DPJ, it did not materialise, partly due to political instability (Asahi Shimbun, 2006r). The NSC is responsible for constructing the main posture of security policy where the prime minister holds authority over

decision-making. The creation of the NSC largely changes the security policy-making process in comparison with past LDP administrations.

First, the planning of NSPG, which were once submitted by the MOD and approved by the prime minister, is now planned and constructed by the NSC (Hughes, 2015). This suggests the transition of bottom-up policy-making to top-down. Every two weeks, the 'four-minister meeting' is held with the prime minister, the chief Cabinet secretary and the ministers from both MOD and MOFA with smooth inter-ministerial co-ordination, suggesting the centralisation of power within the hands of the prime minister. Moreover, the prime minister has the authority to appoint the 'special advisor to the Cabinet' who may represent or share a close view of the prime minister (Cabinet Office, 2013). In addition, 'experts' are summoned when adviser meetings occur where retired SDF members, political scientists and the defence industry, such as the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, gather. In the case of issuing the National Defence Programme Outlines, a 'nine-ministerial meeting' occurs for finalising the Outlines. Although the close examination comes later, the way in which the BMD is developed has, in part, become the other way around.

It has been argued in the previous chapters that the economic groups and the then-DA were a prime factor pushing for BMD development (Noda & Tanaka, 2009). However, with the establishment of the NSC, it can be top-down order to facilitate development. This suggests, albeit depending on the leaders' image that prime ministers such as Abe might give a substantial impetus to accelerate the BMD development. Furthermore, because changing some institutionalised form of anti-militarism, such as the CSD, is a policy-making process where the prime minister's political resources with political stability is a key, the NSC would be able to radically restructure security policy by challenging them (Asahi Shimbun, 2006j).

Further centralisation of the power of the Cabinet over bureaucrats is seen through the establishment of the Cabinet Bureau of Personnel Affairs (Kuramochi, 2015). Conventionally, the right of assigning such top positions amongst bureaucrats, such as a vice administrative minister, lies in the hands of each bureau. However, in holding the authority, the Cabinet could choose like-minded personnel or switch if the person was considered inappropriate in the role. This substantially increases the authority of the Cabinet. As discussed previously, the examination of domestic institutions for policy-making reveals 'leaders'. In this period, the prime minister (as a central focus of

this chapter), the ministers of the MOFA and MOD, the chief Cabinet secretary and the advisers are defined as ‘leaders’.

Leaders’ image

In addition to the above-identified leaders, in previous chapters, there has been the influence of *kokubō-zoku*, the MOD and the MOFA, which should be incorporated and examined in the variable of leaders’ image. First, the examination of domestic institutions for policy-making reveals that the prime minister’s centralisation of power indicates the increased relative weight of the prime minister’s image. In the period between 2012 and 2018, Abe’s premiership was unlike the previous periods where short-lived prime ministers seemed to render their views less important. Abe is often described as a neo-autonomist and revisionist, which arguably stems from his nationalistic slogan ‘ending the post-war regime’, which pays particular attention to the 1946 constitution and its possible change to constitutionally recognising the SDF as the military (Samuels, 2007). He crucially emphasises the US-Japan security alliance on numerous occasions, most notably in the case of Trump’s victory in the 2016 U.S. presidential election (Sheila, 2017). From this, his image arguably leans more towards the US ally when it comes to strategic culture.

We will now consider the ministers of the MOD and MOFA. Four members of the LDP served the respective positions. For the MOFA, Fumio Kishida (between 2012 and 2017) and Taro Kono (from 2017 onwards) served as ministers. Although Kishida was known for his pacifist stance within the party, his outlook was closer to ‘US ally’, although his view on the constitution and upgrade on BMD was rather cautious and suggestive of a preference for the status quo (Sankei Shimbun, 2017d). He publicly stated there did not seem to be an immediate need to revise Article 9 in 2015 and 2018 (Sankei Shimbun, 2017b). His firm stance on the non-nuclear principles and no possession of nuclear weapons was often seen in the media, with which he argued the importance of strengthening the US alliance (Hosokawa, 2017). The evidence suggests he was rather reluctant about the upgrade of BMD, such as counter-strike capability, but emphasised the importance of economic sanctions on North Korea (Hosokawa, 2017). Kono similarly emphasises the strengthening of economic sanctions on North Korea (Yamamoto, 2017) whilst enhancing the US-Japan security alliance with BMD (Kouo, 2006).

For the MOD, Onodera (2012–2016 and from 2017 onwards) and Inada (2016–2017) served in the position of defence minister. Onodera's view is based on the US alliance; rather than presenting his own ideas, he attempts to represent the view of the MOD (the US ally). Based on one of his interviews and the Diet record, he often prefaces answers to the questions 'with the information from the MOD' (Sakasegawa, 2017). On the other hand, Inada arguably leaned towards a 'normalist' view despite a rather short period as defence minister. She, like other *kokubō-zoku*, advocated for the need to acquire nuclear weapons as part of the national security policy (Inada & Satou, 2011). During her term, she was keen on upgrading the BMD by considering acquiring Aegis Ashore or THAAD missiles.

According to the NSC The number of special advisers to the prime ministers in the NSC is 13, seven of whom are academics. Their expertise is wide and ranges from Middle Eastern politics to the European Union and Latin American politics. Therefore, their view is rather unclear as to their individual strategic culture. On the other hand, three of them are retired SDF members—each from the Air, Ground and Marine SDF—although their current position is different. This suggests that given one of the main tasks of Marine and Air SDF is now BMD, which is highly integrated with the US military, these views are arguably close to the US ally. Perhaps, more importantly, Ryoichi Oriki, the former chief of staff (the highest-ranking officer), was a member of the special advisers' group. He published a book in which he argues that, in the end, Japan should be 'independent' and rely less on the US, which suggests he is a mild normalist (Oriki, 2015). With one member from the National Institute for Defence Studies, the remaining members come from the private sector.

As discussed, the MOFA has the strategic culture of the US ally. Furthermore, the MOD has seemingly strengthened its view on the US ally too. This is because one of the MOD's *raison d'être* is to keep the SDF and if possible, expand. *Kokubō-zoku* in the LDP has developed a firmly entrenched view of normalism with strong military capabilities. Ishiba began to put forward a stronger view on Japan's security to revise the non-nuclear principles (Sakakibara, 2017). The committee of national defence in the LDP has always advocated acquiring counter-strike capabilities as well as a more radical upgrade of the BMD, even in the 2000s (Yomiuri Shimbun, 2004a), with which even some *kokubō-zoku* from the LDP went as far to say that Japan might need to threaten others with nuclear weapons (Asahi Shimbun, 2009k, 2013h)

Following Abe's image or materialisation/concretisation of his by others: Nascent ideas of offensive realist strategy

Although there is a level of difference in leaders' view, which is often either more radical or milder than the Cabinet direction on security policy, no evidence suggests that the abovementioned leaders show an explicit opposition to the Cabinet decision and, more importantly, Abe. This is a stark difference compared with the DPJ where the ministers of the MOD and the MOFA and the prime minister had very different views, such as the US security alliance and the relocation of the Futenma US bases. Mikuriya (2015) put this little opposition down to 'the atmosphere' within the LDP. That is, now that regime change is not a far-fetched scenario given the DPJ's landslide victory in the 2009 election, most of the LDP members share the idea that internal divergence of opinion over policy issues cannot be afforded (Mikuriya, 2015).

Several proposals are made by groups where Abe plays a central role in the decision-making process. With the absence of the opposition among leaders and the centralisation of the prime minister's power, most of Abe's propositions during his first premiership are again put forward. His private advisory board issued a proposal to allow CSD (Cabinet Office, 2008b) and the ban on the export of arms (Asahi Shimbun, 2013d), which he advocated as prime minister in 2006. NSC was also his idea to strengthen the Cabinet's power (Asahi Shimbun, 2006j), along with the idea of the State Secrecy Law. All of these suggestions for institutional change have significant implications on Japan's BMD structure, although these are discussed in more detail later.

The renewed NDPG in 2014 is also constructed by the NSC, which advocates the further strengthening of the US-Japan alliance with the upgrade of BMD. The previous NDPG in 2010 merely mentioned the 'growing number of the so-called "gray-zone" disputes', defined as 'confrontations over territory, sovereignty and economic interests that are not to escalate into wars' (Ministry of Defense, 2010, p. 3). On the other hand, the revised NDPG re-recognises the gray-zone in the way in which 'gray-zone situations over territory, sovereignty and maritime economic interests tend to linger, raising concerns that they may develop into more serious situations' (Ministry of Defense, 2013, p. 2). Despite the escalated interpretation of gray-zone, making it hard for Japan to respond, the NDPG states that the SDF 'needs to respond to various situations, including "gray-zone" situations which require SDF commitment', and it proposes a

way to respond to these situations under the newly established concept of a 'Dynamic Joint Defense Force' (Ministry of Defense, 2013, p. 7). It officially indicates that Japan steps up its role by 'enhanc[ing] its deterrence and response capability' (Ministry of Defense, 2013, p. 9). The previous NDPG explicitly states the importance and reliance of the indispensable deterrence provided by the US.

Because the centralisation of the Cabinet power seemed to not only make a smooth co-ordination between bureaucrats and politicians (the Cabinet) easier but also enable the prime minister's view to reflect on security policy-making, at the point of policy planning, the leaders' image, in particular Abe's vision, is more or less translated into the overarching security policy orientation. The security policy stance indicates the nascent sign of offensive realist strategy.

Domestic institutions

The period between 2012 and 2018 arguably underwent the most substantial change in domestic institutions. There was not only an institutionalised form of anti-militarism but also new institutions and regulations to facilitate BMD development. This highly reflects on leaders' image, and hence new security policy orientation suggested by his advisory groups and the NSC.

The State Secrecy Law

The first is the State Secrecy Law. The official name is the Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets, and it was enacted in 2013 soon after the NSC was established. The law covers information such as 'operation of the SDF', 'signal or imagery information in relation to the defence', and information of weapons including those at the R&D stage (Kaido & Shimizu, 2014). The punishment for violation of the law is imprisonment for a maximum of 10 years. This is much stricter than the GSOMIA signed by the US in 2006. The implication of the BMD system indicates that Japan could have strict rules on military information other than the US so that GSOMIA could be signed with other countries such as South Korea more easily.

Further integration of the US is expected. In fact, within two years since the law was enacted, a renewed Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defence Cooperation to strengthen Bilateral Planning Mechanism and Alliance Coordination Mechanism through the

Security Consultative Committee and Bilateral Operations Coordination Centre. The law is similar to that of the US, and the NSC is also based on the US NSC with which both can co-ordinate. As Samuels (1994) argues, Japan has been known as ‘spy heaven’. It is a sign of Japan’s desire to share more information (Pollmann, 2015). The sharing of more qualified information regarding BMD would be expected.

The ban on the export of arms

The next erosion of the institutionalised form of anti-militarism is seen through the replacement of the ban on arms export by the Three Principles on Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology 2014, which later goes hand-in-hand with the newly established Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA) under the MOD. In fact, the renewed three principles, in essence, do not differ so much from the relaxation on the ban on arms export, issued in 2011 under the Noda administration because the basic three principles are more or less the same (M. Morimoto, 2014). The implications of the new principles are symbolic and institutional practices to allow export. Whilst cases such as the US-Japan joint development of BMD-related equipment were considered ‘exceptions’, under the new principles these are legitimate exports (Mori, 2014).

With the new regulations, Japan can sweep up the international image of a ‘closed country’ in terms of defence technology and military equipment and promote its ‘proactive contributions’ through the export and transfer of military equipment and technology (Mori, 2014). It also aims to eliminate the internal image of ‘a merchant of death’ (*Shi no Shounin*) through the ‘dual-use’ of technology, putting the technology of private sectors (spin-in) in military and vice versa (spin-off) (CISTEC, 2015). These institutional practices judging whether a particular military technology or equipment can be transferred are specified under the new regulations. In general, special committees of the MOFA, MOD and METI make a collective decision, and in a case that requires cautious decisions, the NSC is responsible for the decision-making (M. Morimoto, 2014). This suggests that Japan has an official channel with which other countries communicate and negotiate with the potential cases of transfer and export. Japan did not have any of these committees for foreign communication apart from the US.

Along with the Cabinet’s intention to expand ‘military business overseas’, a new

institution, ATLA, was established in 2015. This institution aims to streamline the process of acquiring and developing military technology in a more unified way. The degree of government intention can be seen by the size of the institution where 1,800 individuals work (ATLA, 2016). The predecessor, the Equipment Procurement and Construction Office, had only 600 employees. The aim of ATLA is to reduce inflated costs of development and manufacturing given Japan's limited budget due to the 1% ceiling of GDP on defence expenditure. It also participates in international exhibitions of military technology across the globe to promote and engage in joint development aside from the US. Although indirect, the implications for BMD can be substantial in the long-term. Hitherto, ATLA has succeeded in reducing 1.8 trillion yen—one-third of the annual defence budget (Ministry of Defense, 2017a). To put it simply, the more costs saved, the more investment can be made on BMD.

The future accumulative cost reduction through an effective procurement would help to allocate a larger budget on BMD because it is arguably the costliest in terms of the defence equipment in Japan. The expansion of joint collaboration and export of BMD-related equipment would not only facilitate the process of development but also reduce the manufacturing costs due to the expansion of the production base besides the domestic markets. In fact, almost immediately after the establishment of the ATLA, the parts of PAC-3 produced by the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries are exported to the US (Bee Yun, 2016). Furthermore, because NATO embarked on the BMD system in tandem with the US, Japan could play a more active role in expanding BMD-related export and joint development, which would not only allow further cost reduction but also take the lead in the technological development of BMD. The director of the ATLA stated that the aim to 'secure technological superiority' given China's rise is suggestive of Japan's readiness for an arms race (Kallender-Umezu, 2017).

As of 2017, Japan signed an agreement concerning the transfer of defence equipment and technology with seven countries—Germany, Italy, the UK, France, the US, India and Australia—according to publically available information (ATLA, 2016). Due to the difficulty handling the classified information in BMD technology, Japan has not embarked on the joint research on BMD-related equipment with countries other than the US. Signing an agreement such as GSOMIA would enable them to collaborate, which would lead to the further enhancement of BMD in Japan.

Collective Self-Defence

The enactment of the legislation to allow the right of CSD is arguably the biggest change in the institutionalised form of anti-militarism; its impact on BMD structure is also substantial. The first implication of the CSD legislature on BMD is to protect the US Aegis destroyers in their operations or missions (Swaine *et al*, 2001). In times of attack on these destroyers, Japan could protect them with the use of force. On the one hand, given the higher number of US BMD-equipped Aegis destroyers deployed in Japan, protecting them would contribute to the maintenance of the BMD system, which would be prepared for an emergency at any time. On the other hand, this also means further integration, if not complete subsuming, into the US military, such as the US-led missions that would request Japan's dispatch of the Aegis destroyers (Kaneda, 2016). Furthermore, it is important to note that CSD is not necessarily confined to the case of the US but also its close allies. This leaves room for further co-operation and co-ordination with other countries, such as South Korea, if the security ties are strengthened to the point where the Cabinet defines it as 'Japan's close ally'.

The second is more in relation to an actual military operation in BMD to allow Japan to address missiles directed towards the US but not necessarily the US bases in Japan. First, the legislature once and for all resolved the discussion as to whether the joint deployment of BMD is a violation of individual self-defence (Hughes, 2007). In case a missile flies over Japan to Hawaii or Guam, sharing and transmitting information of the missile caught by Japan's radar system with the US was considered a debatable action. Helping the US address the missiles coming towards US territory presumably had nothing to do with Japan's defence. Nevertheless, the legislature allowed officially the sharing of information in the past. In this sense, the CSD serves as a legal adjustment to the current situation.

Last, the legislature paved the way for Japan's ability to develop BMD to address missiles in the boost phase (Hughes, 2017). In the past, the direction of the missiles in the boost phase was hard to detect; therefore, Japan could not address them due to the prohibition on CSD. Moreover, as discussed, Japan could address missiles flying over it towards Hawaii or Guam. The US-Japan can now develop a BMD system to address missiles in the three phases—boost, mid-air and terminal—depending on the speed of technological development.

State-society relations

Although the NSC arguably has similar views on Keidanren and the defence industry—or the other way around—it does not mean these actors did not play an active role in BMD development. In this period, Keidanren not only continued its lobbying to the LDP but also resumed financial contributions to support the LDP, the degree to which simply cannot be ignored. Keidanren proposed an idea of the new regulation on arms export in a way that involved more private sectors in the pursuit of international joint research and production (Chosyu Shimbun, 2014). Through the allowance of international joint development or research on military equipment, Keidanren plays a role in channelling the domestic defence industry and its counterparts overseas. Even before the new principles of transfer and export of military equipment and technology were enacted, Keidanren dispatched its own research team to Italy and the UK to discuss potential business opportunities (Asahi Shimbun, 2013c).

Keidanren went ahead of the LDP in considering practical measures to export military equipment. First, it was Keidanren that proposed the establishment of an institution responsible for mainstreaming arms export in a more systemic manner (Asahi Shimbun, 2014b; Keidanren, 2013). This later materialised in the ALTA. Furthermore, given the LDP's move to allow the right of CSD, Keidanren had already anticipated the would-be expanded role of the SDF that would go in tandem with the increased demand for military equipment. Therefore, together with the relaxation of the ban on the export of arms, Keidanren submitted a proposal to the Abe administration to make the promotion of arms export one of the national strategies (Keidanren, 2015). Although this proposal did not fully come to fruition, the LDP and the MOD tried to implement a policy to give the defence sector financial aid and allow a loan with special interest rates (Reuters, 2014b). Keidanren actively promoted domestic collaboration on military research between the defence industry and universities. In so doing, the MOD announced direct financial support to military-related research. Although in 2016, when it was issued, the budget was 600 million yen, it showed a tremendous increase in 2017 at 11 billion yen (Asahi, 2016). In the end, the ban on arms export and subsequent activities further eroded one of the institutionalised forms of anti-militarism: the ban on military-related research.

Although these Keidanren activities did not necessarily improve the BMD system immediately and directly, a level of consequence has been seen. As mentioned, the

export and international collaboration of the BMD equipment already began, for which the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Kawasaki Heavy Industries are responsible. In terms of research on the military, a highly developed radar system, which is one of the integral parts of the BMD system, is already underway in collaboration with universities (Asahi Shimbun, 2016b).

Keidanren's financial support of the LDP is also substantial in that it contributes to the maintenance of the LDP as a ruling party, which facilitates the implementation of the current progressive security policy. Keidanren re-initiated political donation in 2013, which had stopped during the DPJ regime. Keidanren asked the companies belonging to it for a political donation that accumulates approximately 2 billion yen each year and has continued to increase for the last five years (Mainichi Shimbun, 2017b). Amongst the political parties, the LDP is most financially advantageous with its 23 billion yen in comparison with the second-largest party that has a revenue of 10 billion yen. This means Keidanren contributes up to 10% of the LDP's financing. The substantial financial advantage directly translates into election results. Keidanren indirectly contributes to the stability of the LDP—in particular, the Abe administration—which pursues progressive security policy through BMD (Asahi Shimbun, 2017e).

Komeito unable to be a veto player: A dysfunctional brake or mere pawn?

Another key aspect of intervening variables—domestic institutions—is the existence and influence of the 'veto player'. In this period, institutionally, the Komeito is a veto player who, according to Ripsman *et al.* (2016, p. 93), 'would have a greater opportunity to shape, constrain, or defeat policies at odds with their preferences'. The principles of the Komeito, as discussed, significantly differ from those of the LDP. In all the elections taking place in the 2012–2018 period (Upper House elections in 2013 and 2016; Lower House elections in 2012, 2014 and 2017), the LDP would not have been able to secure two-thirds of seats in the Diet without the Komeito as an effective coalition partner.

Institutionally, the Komeito has two means to influence decision-making. The first is Cabinet decision, which requires a unanimous agreement of all Cabinet members, including the one from the Komeito. Rejecting the proposal for the Cabinet decision has a destabilising impact, which makes the Komeito a veto player (Sataka, 2016). The second is the enactment of laws or policy-making. In general, if the ruling party holds

more than half of the seats in both houses, it can institutionally railroad its policy initiatives. Therefore, as the LDP itself does not hold more than two-thirds of seats, the Komeito is institutionally capable of preventing the enactment of a policy plan.

Nevertheless, what the Komeito did was at most to add a non-substantial reflection of its preferences on policy plans and slightly delay Japan's response to the strategic environment in times of changing domestic institutions—an institutionalised form of anti-militarism. The planning of the State Secrecy Law that facilitated the process of day-to-day security policy-making between Japan and the US, leading to the close co-ordination of BMD systems (Kaido & Shimizu, 2014). The Komeito only succeeded in requiring the LDP to add sentences to protect 'the right to know' for both the public and the media so that the media is not the target of punishment under the law (Asahi Shimbun, 2013e). The Komeito also changed the plan on the new principles of the export of arms in the way in which the details of export should be made available to the public (Asahi Shimbun, 2014a). When it comes to CSD, the Komeito was capable of adding a clause of the conditions for the use of force. The coalition party negotiation took a couple of months to finalise; in a way, this delayed the response to the strategic environment, albeit slightly.

There are many areas where the Komeito did not act as a veto player when it could have. For the first time, the NDPG advocated the need for Japan to 'enhance its deterrence and response capability' with the SDF's commitment to the grey zone, clearly indicating the enhanced role of Japan in the international security (Ministry of Defense, 2013, p. 7). The Komeito approved without any opposition. The same goes for the renewed Guidelines for the US-Japan security alliance. Regarding the acquisition of controversial BMD equipment such as Aegis Ashore, the Komeito kept silent (Asahi Shimbun, 2017l). Even with the discussion of ideas of constitutional revision, the Komeito hedged its stance against the LDP to specify the role of the SDF in the revised constitution by stating 'it is not that we do not understand the LDP's plan, further discussion is necessary' (AERA, 2017). In the end, although the Komeito could squeeze its ever-so-slight request out of the coalition negotiation, it worked as if it was one of the LDP's factions with different views on security.

Qualitative and quantitative improvement: A shifting of Japan's defensive realist grand strategy

This period saw the strong emergence of progressive leaders' view, in particular, Abe, echoing with that of MOD and the inactive coalition partner. This directly reflects on BMD qualitatively and quantitatively.

First, Japan reversed the trend of decreasing its defence budget for the first time in 11 years. As of 2017, it increased for five consecutive years. The evidence suggests Abe had a meeting with the officials from the Ministry of Finance and ordered it not to reduce the defence budget (Asahi Shimbun, 2013k). In the end, the defence budget increased by nearly half a trillion yen to 5.250 trillion yen, a degree of increase that goes beyond the 1% GDP ceiling. In 2017, Abe insisted that during the coming fiscal year of 2018, the Cabinet should not be constrained by the 1% ceiling (Asahi Shimbun, 2017a).

The likelihood to continue the trend of increasing the defence budget is arguably high. When including revolving payment, the defence expenditure already exceeds the 1% ceiling because expensive defence equipment often takes years to build or prepare, and accordingly, only the divided costs are considered part of the defence budget. Whilst Japan constantly used this payment method to leave the payment for the following year, the amount of this payment has increased substantially (Ministry of Defense, 2017). During the DPJ's regime, the revolving payment remained around 3 trillion yen; however, it increased to 4 trillion yen by 2017 due to the increase in BMD-related costs, such as building the Aegis destroyers. As such, any remaining cost is fixed, and new projects or periodical costs of repair are constantly required by the MOD. More than 80% of the defence budget comprises labour costs (Ministry of Defense, 2017b), and the defence budget will likely continue to increase.

The MOD has acquired a level of autonomy for BMD improvement under the Abe administration, unlike the DPJ regime where the reduction of the defence budget was an urgent task. Nevertheless, the building of two additional Aegis destroyers with BMD capability is projected on the defence budget, which will expand Japan's BMD system to eight BMD Aegis destroyers. Because at least two Aegis destroyers are required to cover Japan from missiles, eight Aegis destroyers make it possible to protect Japan throughout the year and are scheduled for completion by 2020 (Ministry of Defense, 2017). Similarly, the number of SDF units equipped with PAC-3 will increase from 16

as of 2016 to 24 by 2020 (Mainichi Shimbun, 2017c). The joint research of SM-3 Block IIA paid off, and the budget in 2017 includes its acquisition that is partially produced in Japan (Ministry of Defense, 2016). The missile could address ICBMs predicated on the assumption that North Korean missiles will be directed towards the US (Panda, 2017).

Japan, therefore, is finally ready to address missiles outside the country through the exercise of CSD. The quality of missiles is enhanced in other areas. The number of PAC-3 missiles not only increased but also the defence budget in 2017 intended to acquire PAC-3 MSE (missile segment enhancement). This missile, in comparison with the existing missiles, is capable of addressing missiles in twice as wide and high an area, which takes up more than half of BMD-related expenditure in 2017. A further improvement is underway regarding FES-7 Radar that is to be equipped with the capability to detect and chase BMD missiles (Ministry of Defense, 2017).

Arguably, the biggest improvement in BMD is the Cabinet's decision to acquire two Aegis Ashore systems, a land-based component to shoot down missiles. Although introducing THAAD was also an option, the Cabinet leaned towards Aegis Ashore partly due to its less expensive deployment costs (Japan Times, 2017b). According to MOD officials, the two Aegis Ashore units should be able to cover entire regions of Japan with the SM-3 Block IIA missiles. This is because the developed SM-3 IIA could reach the range of 2000km radius (Defense Industry Daily, 2017). This land-based BMD system is also compatible with the Aegis destroyers to be deployed by 2020. Aegis Ashore BMD system adds the existing two BMD capabilities (Aegis Destroyers and PAC-3) to another layer of missile defence. The further significance of this acquisition is an indication that BMD is in future used to counter-balance against China because it is equipped with SM-6 missiles to shoot down cruise missiles from China (Mainichi Shimbun, 2018b).

Although the Cabinet constantly denied the intention to acquire counter-strike capabilities, the new research projects proposed by the MOD indicate such future development and application. First, counter-strike capabilities are based on a response to the initiation of attack towards Japan, whilst a pre-emptive strike is based on 'first strike' with the concerns of immediate attacks. Therefore, the past Cabinet interpretation allows for possessing 'counter-strike capabilities' because it falls under the right of individual self-defence (Mainichi Shimbun, 2017d). Nevertheless, the term 'counter-strike capability' drew substantial public attention and opposition because it

was considered a violation of an ‘exclusively defence-oriented security policy’. Thus, the MOD is careful enough not to mention the word in its official documents. It starts with the research on supersonic glide bombs, which is primarily designed for island defence supposedly against China. However, as Honda (1998) argues, it can be easily used as a counter-strike against North Korea as part of ‘offensive’ element of BMD system. The significance can be seen through its degree of investment: 10 billion yen on ‘research’ (*kenkyu*), although development (*kaihatsu*) could easily cost more than 10 billion yen, such as ship-to-ship missiles (Ministry of Defense, 2016). The same goes for the new anti-ship missile (7.7 billion yen on its research). While both missiles are named ‘island defence’, Honda continues that technical application should make it possible for counter-strike capabilities.

Furthermore, arguably the most sophisticated missiles with a wider range and high-speed capacity had been co-researched with the UK and have now moved into the ‘development phase’. These are to be equipped with newly acquired 42 F-35 (Sankei Shimbun, 2017f). Whilst the government denies it, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* (2018) reports a plan to repair Izumo-class helicopter destroyers to be aeroplane carriers so that F-35 could be flown from them to engage in combat. In any military confrontation, including North Korea, counter-strike attack requires aeroplanes to fly close to the military base of the enemy to attack. Thus, such missiles and aeroplanes are critical. In fact, South Korea and the US conducted a military drill with F-35 and aeroplane carriers allegedly in anticipation that both would be engaged in attacking North Korean military and control bases (Kimura, 2018). The above ongoing projects and acquisition is a sign of enhancing ‘deterrence’, as indicated in Japan’s NDPG through offensive capabilities.

6.5 Conclusion

The strategic environment surrounding Japan has been aggravated, particularly for the last five years, which indicates a clear signal from the international system to incentivise Japan to act in a realist manner (Grønning, 2014; Hornung, 2014; Hughes, 2016; Lam, 2017a). As NCR dictates, the strategic environment delineates options for Japan, and the more restrictive the strategic environment, the fewer options available to the state.

Japan’s response to the strategic environment has come much closer to the one predicted by realists: counter-balancing against North Korea and China. In so doing, Japan has recalibrated its security posture not only militarily but also institutionally regarding

BMD, which was not seen in the previous period between 2009 and 2012 during the DPJ's regime. First, like the period between 2004 and 2008 when legal rearrangement took place for BMD deployment, Japan underwent a substantial institutional change. The NSC was established to centralise authority in terms of security policy formation and highly reflected Abe's vision, as demonstrated by its NDPG (Ministry of Defense, 2013).

Following the logic of Japan's grand strategy of defensive realism, Japan attempted to strengthen the security ties with the US further by enacting the State Secrecy Law to mitigate US concerns about the leaking of classified information (Samuels, 1994). The ban on the export of arms was finally replaced by the export principles so that not only joint development and transfer with the US but also international co-development and production became possible. Although the 1% ceiling of the defence budget remains—it may not in future—the MOD and the Cabinet has made every effort to reduce the costs of defence through the promotion of international joint development and the establishment of the ALTA to maximize the enhancement of deterrence. This went in tandem with the increase in the defence budget for five consecutive years (Ministry of Defense, 2017). Most importantly, Japan is now capable of exercising CSD so that it not only provides security with the US as a sign of more active participation in the international security but also can form mutual alliances in addition to the US.

There is a sign of a grand strategic shift in this period towards an offensive realist-type strategy with the emergence of acquiring offensive capabilities. Although the term counter-strike capabilities were not mentioned, Japan embarked on research on supersonic glide bombs and new anti-ship missile together with almost completed Meteor missiles as a joint research project with the UK (Mainichi Shimbun, 2017a). This can be equipped with the F-35 Japan intended to purchase. Japan's alleged intention to improve Izumo-class destroyers to be aircraft carriers to accommodate F-35 will ready Japan for actual combat and military confrontation with its 'offensive capabilities'. Although the government's stance did not imply immediate consideration of acquiring offensive capabilities 'directly against' North Korea, many suggested acquiring them, including the minister of the MOD, Onodera (Sankei Shimbun, 2017e). Recent evidence suggests Japan in the next year or so plans to purchase cruise missiles that have offensive capabilities (Mainichi Shimbun, 2017a). The Cabinet termed them as 'stand-off missiles' because they are for addressing invasion outside the range of an enemy's aeroplane (Mainichi Shimbun, 2018a).

The case study demonstrated the importance of leaders' image in this period in comparison with the previous one (between 2009 and 2012). Despite the constant efforts of the MOD, the MOFA and actors in the variable of state-society relations, such as Keidanren, to push for the more active militarisation of Japan, leaders did not choose to do so in the DPJ regime. The reason lies in their dilemma between political legitimacy and strategic needs delineated from their strategic cultural views. In the case of Abe, he did not hesitate to railroad his policy initiatives such as the NSC, the State Secrecy Law and CSD. Given that all the prime ministers except for Abe did not pursue CSD as a policy objective—though they talked about CSD as a potentially necessary agenda for Japan's security policy—the importance of Abe is accentuated; hence, the leaders' image.

State-society relations arguably became less significant in comparison with the initial phase of BMD (the 1990s and the first half of the 2000s), when there was considerable information asymmetry between leaders and bureaucrats/actors in state-society relations. However, this is because the leaders' image is similar to such actors in the variable so that it functions to give additional support to the leaders, contributing to political stability. All of their images are more or less explained by the strategic culture of the US ally and normalism. Therefore, given the absence of conflicts between the two strategic cultures, in terms of BMD, the strategic culture of US ally and normalism seemed to reach the same path Japan should pursue: upgrading the US security alliance to facilitate the militarisation of Japan.

The variable of domestic institutions also played a reduced role due to the significant erosion by institutional changes, leaving fewer institutional barriers. What is left is arguably the constitution and a 1% defence budget ceiling, the latter of which is about to erode. One interesting observation is that over the course of the last two decades arguably another conceptual barrier emerges in tandem with changing Japan's security role—that is, 'exclusively defence-oriented security policy'. This has been effectively used as an excuse for Japan to take up its role and pursue BMD. As such, despite the constitutional interpretation allowing the possession of counter-strike capability, the controversy arose in the debate of acquiring offensive capabilities. Therefore, the legacy of defensive realism in the 2000s has haunted Japan's progressive attempt to further a grand strategic shift based on offensive realism.

Such domestic institutions are arguably backed by the public to some extent, which is why Japan did not upgrade its security policy as much as it could as a sign of the dilemma between strategic needs and political legitimacy. Although the past five years saw a substantial degree of an upgrade, political stability has always been the central concern of Abe's Cabinet. Described by Hughes (2017) as 'bait-and-switch' election strategy, the Cabinet carefully avoided any militarisation policy during the run-up to the elections, which is demonstrated by the other case study of constitutional revision.

In conclusion, mainly due to the strong view of the leaders, echoing those of the actors in state-society relations, Japan significantly weakened the power of institutionalised form of anti-militarism in this period, the degree of which paved the way for not only further improvement of BMD but also for maturity of defensive realist grand strategy to shift offensive realist one. Although the grand strategic shift has not completed, Japan should be progressively leaned towards this grand strategy.

7 Conclusion

The final chapter starts with the summary of the thesis followed by the contributions to the literature. While discussing the value of NCR as an effective theoretical framework, it aims to provide a specific answer to the three research purposes (1) determining under what conditions Japan accelerates/decelerates its balancing behaviour, (2) investigating the causal mechanisms of the key factors, and (3) identifying the relative weight of each factor. The conclusion also puts forward a new interpretation of Japan's grand strategic shift with further research scope and future implications on where Japan is headed.

Summary of the thesis

The thesis largely confirms the validity of NCR as an effective theoretical framework to analyse Japan because it provides a clear link between structure and policy outcome through the intervening variables. It observes the causal mechanisms of each intervening variable to mediate the impact of the structure. This does not mean the structure is largely diminished; the more aggravating the strategic environment, the greater its influence. In response, leaders prioritise strategic needs while they maintain a level of public support. The level of public opposition waned where domestic institutions' hitherto role of constitutional guardian was downplayed by leaders. Ultimately, Japan, which only began the broad discussion of constitutional revision in 2004 and issued the Cabinet decision to deploy BMD, has seen substantial development in both cases. The balancing behaviour of Japan moved towards defensive realist strategy by 2009, and since 2012, it again shifted towards offensive realist strategy.

On the one hand, CSD was allowed in 2015 when leaders were comparatively more passionate about their strategic visions. By 2017, initial agreement on the constitutional revision of Article 9 was reached within the ruling party (Asahi Shimbun, 2018f). On the other hand, the degree of BMD capability was substantially upgraded qualitatively and quantitatively, and Japan has begun considering the acquisition of offensive capabilities such as aircraft carriers and 'counter-strike capability' (cruise missiles) (Mainichi Shimbun, 2018a). Thus, the thesis explains Japan's responsiveness to the structure in a more nuanced way with the intervening variables. In other words, the acute strategic environment creates a favourable situation where leaders would find it easy to pursue their strategic visions. Such a contextualization on how Japan behaves provides a better explanation in comparison to a constructivist account which is based

on norms and domestic institutions. Nonetheless, there is also the stage (2009–2012) when leaders, in spite of their awareness of the strategic needs, could not materialise sufficient resources to realise their will. Accordingly, the influence of domestic institutions goes beyond leaders. In this stage, domestic institutions, along with the distance between leaders and state-society relations, accounts for the deceleration of Japan's balancing behaviour despite the more aggravating strategic environment. Thus, the thesis provides a more nuanced account for Japan's behaviour than those put forward by both realist and constructivist scholars in that the thesis confirms when and how each variable of realism and constructivism come into play.

Amongst the intervening variables, leaders' image is the most important variable in the NCR model in the case of Japan. Contrary to the suggestions in some literature, the so-called anti-militarism was not as substantial as claimed. While the state-society relation plays a crucial role, its influence declined as the strategic environment became aggravated. Thus, the thesis confirms the importance of leaders in Japan—particularly the degree of their enthusiasm to respond to the environment, even though it might put them in a position to lose public support.

In summary, Japan started to shift its security policy in 2012 from an increase in defensive capabilities, which is more or less in line with Japan's stance of exclusively defensive-oriented defence, to a nascent revisionist stance with the offensive capabilities to balance against China and North Korea. Given the ongoing aggravation of the strategic environment, NCR predicts that Japan will increase its military budget to develop further its offensive capabilities, which ultimately destabilises the region to a substantial degree as offensive realism predicts as a new, yet nuanced view on Japan's behaviour. In this sense, NCR, rather than simply dichotomised between defensive realism and offensive realism, utilises the intervening variables to capture Japan's security policy development, its shift to an offensive realist state, and how, why and when it occurred.

Contributions to the literature

Through NCR testing, the thesis first and foremost confirms that NCR adds sufficient explanatory power and effectiveness of incorporation of domestic politics in the form of intervening variables. The thesis advocates that the prime reason for the acceleration and deceleration of Japan's behaviour, despite the strong signals from the structure, lies

in the struggle between leaders' dilemma and domestic institutions as an internal barrier.

It not only highlights the usefulness of NCR to help strengthen the theorisation of a state's behaviour within NCR but also indicates that NCR is a contextually informed theory, serving as a guide for policymakers (Kitchen, 2010). Second, the significance of NCR effectiveness is further confirmed through the case studies to investigate how a major power reacts to a rising power (i.e. China), providing a theoretically rigorous case to help theorise regional power transition and its dynamics (Paul, 2016; Williams, Lobell & Jesse, 2012). Lastly, by deductively incorporating domestic-level variables, the thesis provides an analysis to add the 'political' in the field of IR, particularly departing from structural realism. This overcomes the well-known criticism of NCR as an ad hoc application with the same basis of selection of evidence.

Empirically, the thesis fills the gap in the literature that contributes to Japan's change in velocity of balancing. Given the structure continuously incentivising Japan to be engaged in balancing, it is crucial for leaders to take action by effectively maintaining political stability, which is largely responsible for initiating and accelerating balancing behaviour. Whilst domestic institutions, including the constitution, are responsible generally for the slowed progress of balancing behaviour, they are not as influential as expected by constructivists. More importantly, these domestic barriers have mattered less as the strategic environment grew more restrictive, which shows a substantial finding in the literature of Japan's security policy as the constitution and the publicly prevailed anti-militarism are often considered a key to constrain Japan's balancing behaviour. Unlike constructivism, the thesis contends that objective impacts of the structure cannot be neglected, it constantly gives signals to Japan to behave in certain ways.

Second, the analysis adds a key interpretation of Japan's security policy development to the existing literature, rather than simply characterising it as 'incremental' or 'progressive'. Japan seems to have shifted its grand strategy from the one based on defensive realism to the one informed by offensive realism. Furthermore, it gives a more nuanced view of Japan's balancing behaviour, which is not only incremental but also non-linear, by investigating under what conditions each intervening variable comes into play to accelerate/decelerate its balancing behaviour. This finding is new to the existing literature in that the NCR analysis explains the unpredictable elements. Furthermore, the thesis provides a theoretical prediction which seems to suggest a

radical departure from the past path of Japan as well as the existing literature with its nascent offensive realist grand strategy. Such a prediction is well-supported by the rigorous application of NCR.

Unlike constructivists literature, such as Berger (1996) and Katzenstein (1996), the thesis does not consider the socially accepted and institutionally embedded anti-militarism factor constraining Japan's balancing behaviour as much as them. In comparison with relational constructivists such as Hagstrom and Gustafsson (2015), who argue that 'emotion' and 'relational identity' of Japan vis-à-vis China triggers Japan to develop its security policy, the thesis contends that while the structure is crucial, depending on leaders and political stability, Japan can stagnate its policy development, nowhere near a linear, stable development. As discussed, whilst the thesis is partially in line with realist literature on Japan in terms of its incremental development of security policy, it contextualises how, when and why unit-level variables come into play besides the structure through the application of NCR.

Third, looking at the two cases—military strategy through BMD and the institutional/legal capacity of security policy—highlights two types of quasi-independent security policy-making with different speeds and processes of balancing. On the one hand, from the perspective of military strategy, Japan always made every effort to maximise balancing power generally within the institutional and legal limits, such as the constitution, thereby being comparatively independent of the policy-making process and the public. On the other hand, the speed of the change in institutional/legal capacity to balance was rather temperamental and hugely dependent on domestic politics. Thus, the thesis helps reconcile realist vs constructivist debate as it delineates respective function and a more nuanced view on Japan's security policy (realist-oriented military development and constructivist-inspired static nature of the constitution) through the two case studies.

Last, the thesis also provides a comprehensive map on many allegedly important domestic factors by addressing how, when and why each matters. There is a link amongst the intervening variables that helps us to understand the complexity of domestic-level factors, each of which is often focused on by the existing literature. Furthermore, the thesis connects these domestic-level variables with the structural-level variable by highlighting each role and function of the intervening variable as a transmission belt between structure and foreign policy outcome. From the following

section, each contribution shall be discussed in more depth.

Under what conditions Japan balances

Throughout the two cases, the thesis addresses the three main research puzzles. First, it examines under what conditions Japan strengthens/weakens its incremental security policy development (i.e. balancing behaviour). It examines how it is possible to compare the relative weight of contentious domestic factors within a single theoretical framework without neglecting the importance of structure. In short, the thesis confirms the fundamental NCR premise that whilst structure incentivises a state to act in certain ways, the ultimate outcome depends on domestic factors regarding how a state chooses the options. The degree of the limitedness of the options depends on the extent to which the strategic environment is restrictive/permissive. Since the starting period of each case study in 2004, the strategic environment surrounding Japan (i.e. North Korea and China) has become increasingly restrictive and has led Japan to engage in balancing more actively. In this sense, the thesis confirms the significance of structure, which imposes more limited choices on Japan. the more restrictive the strategic environment gets, the more likely Japan is to balance against, the degree on which depends largely on leaders' image and partially on domestic institutions.

However, confirmation of the structure itself does not answer the question of under what conditions Japan strengths/weakens its balancing behaviour. This insufficiency of structure per se as an absolute explanatory variable goes to the second purpose of the application of NCR: to find 'causal mechanisms' regarding the intervening variables (leaders' image, domestic institutions and state-society relations) by addressing the second research question of how it is possible to compare the relative weight of each intervening variable.

Each intervening variable plays a different role in the two cases, explaining the relatively quick response to the structure through BMD with the slowed progress of constitutional revision that prevented Japan from engaging itself in balancing behaviour as quickly as it should in theory. This is in fact counter-intuitive because the acquisition and development of military equipment generally take many years—possibly a decade—whilst constitutional revision is policy-making/law-making that institutionally can be implemented within several years.

In realist studies, as argued, Japan's grand strategy has already departed from the existing literature such as mercantile realism (Heginbotham & Samuels, 1998) and reluctant realism (Michael J. Green, 2001). This is because given the public seemingly disinterest in security policy development, along with enthusiastic leaders and bureaucrats, Japan has increasingly focused on security, suggestive of no longer 'reluctant' nor 'mercantile'. The thesis is more in line with 'resentful realism' (Hughes, 2016) and 'new realism' (Auslin, 2017). However, the thesis provides a more clarified conceptualisation on when to further balance and when not to in a rigorous theoretical manner with predictive values. Furthermore, the thesis helps settle debates on various factors, shaping Japan's behaviour by testing when and how each variable plays a role.

Regarding the means to balance against, while the means is determined by the prime minister in terms of overarching approach and bureaucrats in terms of specific ways to balance, Japan's balancing strategy is not necessarily based on strengthening the US alliance. Although it is true that Japan has been strengthening the US alliance, Japan, at the same time has allocated a tremendous resource on internal balancing through the rearrangement of legal constraints and military capability. One can say that the requirement of the US alliance has levelled up (Berger, 2004; Dian, 2014; Michael J. Green & Cooper, 2014; Osius, 2002; Penn, 2014; Rozman, 2015; Wirth, 2015). However, it is also true that Japan's independent military capability and legal security capacity have substantially increased over the last 15 years. Japan now can technically form a quasi-alliance with a third country besides the US, and with the acquisition of counter-strike capability, Japan can theoretically be engaged in conflict unilaterally for the sake of 'individual self-defence'. Thus, the thesis considers that Japan and the US both are actively engaged in balancing together, the former of which already shifted its stance from hedging to active balancing.

Relative Weight of Intervening Variables and Their Causal Mechanism

While the relative weight of each intervening variable has already been examined, the more detailed conditions under which each intervening variable comes into play should be outlined.

Leaders' image

As discussed, leaders' image has the most substantial explanatory power amongst the

other intervening variables. As Table 7.1 shows, the two types of leader play a different role in the two cases. In short, elected politicians have a causal relationship between outcome and role regarding the case of the constitution, where no role seems played by non-elected leaders, whilst non-elected leaders exert substantial influence over the case of BMD. This is particularly because unless elected leaders take on the agenda of constitutional reinterpretation or revision, the discussion did not even start. Non-elected leaders might have lobbied to push the agenda during the period between 2004 and 2018; there is no evidence to show how they might have influenced elected leaders.

However, in the case of constitutional revision and reinterpretation to allow CSD, the evidence shows that the negotiation and finalisation of the plan to allow CSD was held within the ruling coalition, thereby confirming the absent role of non-elected leaders. In the period between 2004 and 2012, elected leaders were almost always caught up by the leaders' dilemma, which prevented them from initiating the discussion to proceed to constitutional revision despite most leaders agreeing on the idea of the revision and CSD. On the other hand, since 2012 onwards, elected leaders became more active in pursuing the constitutional revision and CSD, the latter of which was enacted into law in 2016. Thus, elected leaders are responsible for both delayed and accelerated balancing.

Table 7.1 The Presence/Absence of Leaders' Image

Leaders' image	Article 9			BMD		
	2004–09	2009–12	2012–18	2004–09	2009–12	2012–18
Politicians	○	○	○	△*	×	○
Non-elected leaders	×	×	×	○	○	○
<p>○ Confirmation of the causal mechanism of the variable</p> <p>× Confirmation of no causal mechanism of the variable</p> <p>*△ means both partial absence and presence are found without a definite causal mechanism</p>						

In the case of BMD, non-elected leaders have substantial influence even with the attempt to surpass the constitutional limits. Whilst the Cabinet decision was required to make a decision to deploy BMD in 2004, in this sense elected leaders matter to some

extent. Preparation for BMD introduction and the way in which they took the lead were such that elected leaders did not get involved in the decision-making process as much. Non-elected leaders have a relative authority over what to choose and how to strengthen the military capability in case of BMD.

In the period from 2009 to 2012, non-elected leaders went ahead of the CSD debate and already considered the instant data link system that was to be introduced to Aegis destroyers, allowing close co-operation with the US based on CSD. Elected leaders came into play since 2012 when they began advocating more active engagement in international security with the change in the decision-making process through the establishment of the NSC. This not only echoed non-elected leaders' strategic visions but also gave them lee-way to strengthen military capability in an attempt to introduce offensive weapons. Thus, although without strong commitments from elected leaders, non-elected leaders have always striven to strengthen Japan's military capability. However, with elected leaders on the same page, they can exert a significant influence with more visible material change. Therefore, whilst non-elected leaders play a more important role in BMD, overall, elected politicians' key role in both cases is the most substantial variable.

Domestic institutions (I): Policy-making framework

Domestic institutions are crucial in explaining Japan's slowed or delayed process of security policy development as an institutional barrier. First, the policy-making framework helps to highlight FPEs (i.e. elected and non-elected leaders) and specify their role in the policy-making process between 2004 and 2018. The policy-making framework enables us to accommodate changes in the policy-making process, such as the establishment of the NSC. With the upgrade of the then-DA to ministerial status, the MOD officials are given more power to orchestrate military build-up since 2007, whilst the NSC enabled elected leaders to more closely co-ordinate with non-elected leaders from 2012 onwards. This explains a notable influence of non-elected leaders in the period of 2009 and 2012 over BMD and the combined strength of both elected and non-elected leaders over BMD since 2012. However, such a change in security policy-making framework did not apply to the case of the constitution simply because there was no change in the process of the revision.

Table 7.2 The Presence/Absence of Domestic Institutions

Domestic institutions	Article9			BMD		
	2004–09	2009–12	2012–18	2004–09	2009–12	2012–18
Policy-making framework	○	○	○	○	○	○
Institutionally embedded anti-militarism	○	○	△	△	△	△
Elections	△	×	○	×	×	×
<p>○ Confirmation of the causal mechanism of the variable</p> <p>× Confirmation of no causal mechanism of the variable</p> <p>*△ means both partial absence and presence are found without a definite causal mechanism</p>						

Domestic institutions (II): Institutionally embedded anti-militarism

As is often claimed important by constructivists, institutionally embedded anti-militarism has an explanatory value to account for the delayed process of security policy-making. This includes constitutionally binding restrictions such as the ban on arms export, CSD the use of space and the institutionalised bureau of the CLB to keep the constitutionality. Nonetheless, the thesis finds that the significance of the institutional anti-militarism was not as much as it is claimed to be for several reasons. The analysis intends to measure to what extent it functions as a barrier to block any initiatives to challenge them by leaders. Because these are the institutional barriers, once these are changed—in the case of constitutional reinterpretation, the new interpretation overrides the existing one—they no longer hold any institutional significance. Throughout the period, these are eliminated one by one: the military's use of space in 2007, the elimination of the ban on arms export and the allowance of limited CSD. What remains is the full degree of CSD, the 1% GDP ceiling on the annual defence budget and the constitutional revision that potentially eliminates all hitherto constitutional barriers.

Nonetheless, there is still room for the institutional anti-militarism to weigh in on security policy development. However, arguably the last stand is the constitutional revision, the probability of which became more likely in 2018. If it happens, this would

probably mean that the institutional anti-militarism would not necessarily be considered in influencing Japan's security, at least much less than now.

Domestic institutions (III): Elections

Elections as part of the domestic institution—much related to the general public—are also crucial in explaining the delayed response to the structure as the ruling coalition constantly requires a majority to enact laws to reinterpret or revise the constitution. Most notably, it explains the Cabinet taking almost four years to allow CSD in the period between 2012 and 2018. The general election was held twice between 2013 and 2014, during which the discussion of CSD was blocked as leaders prioritised political stability in the name of the leaders' dilemma. The same goes for constitutional revision, which demands more votes than enacting a law: two-thirds in both houses for the revision, whilst two-thirds of seats in the Lower House should institutionally suffice. In particular, the variable can be a crucial causal mechanism connecting foreign policy and domestic politics in Japan.

State-society relations (I): The public

Whilst predicated on the assumption that the variable of state-society relations would not hold a decisive explanatory power, state-society relations often appeared absent or lacked a causal mechanism to influence security policy-making. As anticipated by the policy-making framework as part of domestic institutions, it is largely left out of the process. The thesis thus intends to examine to what extent the 'indirect impact' of it could be seen.

The public, defined as 'socially accepted anti-militarism', directly responds to particular security policy initiatives and to whether the public aversion to 'militarisation' would be capable of blocking security policy initiatives. The entire period did not observe any mobilisation of the public that was strong enough to change the policy initiatives. Of course, it does not mean the public does not matter at all. The causal mechanism examined by the thesis is that, for instance, initiatives of a security policy by the Cabinet caused a substantial drop in the Cabinet's support rate, ultimately leading to the shuffle of the government with the abortive attempt. This was not found in the period. The general public itself caused political instability, most notably between 2006 and 2012. Six prime ministers and two regime changes caused a significant delay in the

policy-making process and hence balancing behaviour.

However, the way in which the public matters is ‘indirect’ in the sense that the Cabinet’s failures in other policy areas or scandals resulted in a sharp drop in its support rate. This was indirectly taken into consideration in the variable of leaders’ image and elections in the variable of domestic institutions. Furthermore, the public seems more concerned about *seiken-unyō nōryōku* (‘administrative capability’) rather than security policy as one policy area. As discussed later, the administrative capability and its appeal to the public in regards to Japan’s security policy is another scope of research and weakness of the thesis.

Nonetheless, the public in the sense of anti-militarism did not appear as anticipated. A valid causal mechanism of this variable potentially exists, which cannot be confirmed in this thesis. That is, if the national referendum will occur, whether or not the revision occurs is entirely left in the hands of the public. However, until such time, the publicly shared anti-militarism does not hold any direct explanatory power for Japan’s security policy development. Arguably the reason for the absence of the public defined in the thesis lies in the fact that those who show a strong aversion to security policy change are not a majority anymore. Half of the public does not oppose revision.

Table 7.3 The Presence/Absence of State-society Relations

State-society relations	Article9			BMD		
	2004–09	2009–12	2012–18	2004–09	2009–12	2012–18
The public	×	×	×	×	×	×
Economic/societal groups	△	△	×	○	△	×
Opposition parties	×	×	△	×	×	×
○ Confirmation of the causal mechanism of the variable × Confirmation of no causal mechanism of the variable △ There is not a definitive causal mechanism although partial presence is evident						

State-society relations (II): economic/societal groups

Economic groups, whilst largely absent in the case of the constitution, show a level of

influence over both the initial deployment phase of BMD (between 2004 and 2009) and partially in the following period (2009–2012). Although economic groups such as Keidanren could have a causal mechanism as it officially provides a substantial amount of donation to the ruling party (the LDP) with lobbying, the elected leaders did not accommodate in times of political instability in the case of the constitution. More importantly, the main way of dealing with lobbying is adjustment in the way that Keidanren wants regarding economic policy. Furthermore, the interests of Keidanren regarding the constitution often match those of elected leaders. Thus, it is unclear whether the existence of Keidanren and its lobbying is directly responsible for security policy change as a causal mechanism.

In the case of BMD, where Keidanren's economic interests are more outstanding, it gears up the level of lobbying. It issued and submitted a policy proposal to the Cabinet to enact a law allowing for the use of space for defensive purposes, which in turn enables the domestic defence industry to gain profits. Without the defence industry's enthusiasm, particularly demonstrated by the MHI, the early deployment of BMD by 2010 would be impossible with decades-long efforts of the MHI. This shows a causal mechanism between the defence industry and the outcome of BMD in the period between 2004 and 2009.

Furthermore, Keidanren lobbied for the relaxation of the ban on arms export for decades. Despite the DPJ rising to power as the ruling party, which does not show any sign of changing the law, the first relaxation of the ban on arms export was enacted in 2011. Although this does not confirm a definite causal mechanism, the level of influence seems too large to ignore. In the following period of 2012–2018, mainly due to the ruling party's interests and attempts to accommodate the need of Keidanren, there does not seem to be any evidence that Keidanren actively lobbied.

Turning to the societal groups, there is no linkage in the outcome of the case of BMD, arguably because there are no societal groups directly against BMD. For the constitutional revision, as discussed, the potential impact of societal groups is offset by two completely opposite groups: 9jou wo mamoru kai (the organisation to protect Article 9) and Nippon Kaigi (Japan Conference). Similar to the variable of the public, the outcome of the national referendum—should it take place—might give us an avenue to examine how these groups influence the outcome of the referendum.

The last variable is opposition parties, which are absent as a causal mechanism for most of the periods. The opposition parties had an indirect impact on security policy-making by getting votes and rising towards a would-be ruling party in 2009 and 2012. However, due to the fragmentation of opposition parties themselves—the constant split and emergence of new parties—they could not exert institutional influence to block the ruling party's initiative. Such inability is most notably shown in the case of CSD and the discussion of constitutional revision in between 2012 and 2018. All they could do is criticise the attempts to revise and reinterpret the constitution and the Cabinet itself in the hopes of appealing the general public—which was in vain.

Moreover, the aim of such open criticism often has little to do with Japan's security policy or remilitarisation, partly because the once biggest opposition party, the DPJ, was also inclined to revise the constitution. Further, large opposition parties such as the DPJ did not oppose BMD: only tiny, pacifist parties such as the SDP and the Communist Party strongly opposed, despite the lack of institutional strengths. Arguably, in case of future referendums, they could have a chance to appeal to the public to render the referendum unfavourable, the outcome of which, however, is only observable when it happens.

In sum, as Table 7.4 shows, leaders' image is the most important variable in explaining changing velocity of Japan's policy development. While elected politicians are largely present in the case of the constitutional revision, non-elected leaders played a crucial role in BMD in all the periods. Although policy-making framework, part of domestic institutions is present in all the periods in both cases, this serves as a preliminary examination for which actors are identified. Therefore, it does not necessarily have explanatory power. As discussed, the public is the least important variable which is not influential nor present in each case, although for the case of the constitutional revision, it may prove a key variable when the national referendum will take place.

Table 7.4 the Summary of Each Intervening Variable

		Article 9			BMD		
		2004–09	2009–12	2012–18	2004–09	2009–12	2012–18
Leaders' image	Politicians	○	○	○	△	×	○
	Non-elected leaders	×	×	×	○	○	○
Domestic institutions	Policy-making framework	○	○	○	○	○	○
	Institutionally embedded anti-militarism	○	○	△	△	△	△
	Elections	△	×	○	×	×	×
State-society relations	The public	×	×	×	×	×	×
	Economic/societal groups	△	△	×	○	△	×
	Opposition parties	×	×	△	×	×	×

The thesis adds more values to the various key factors in terms of how these play a role in shaping Japanese policy. As touched upon in the literature review chapter, growing attention to the prime minister (Hughes, 2015a; Shinoda, 2011; Uchiyama, 2013) is a key to examining Japan's security policy. The thesis indeed confirms the prime minister is one of the most important factors, while the thesis similarly confirms the importance of bureaucrats particularly in terms of BMD. This is not in line with the above literature as these often argue that relative decline in the influence of bureaucrats. The prime minister matters when it comes to a drastic shift in security policy, which, however, does not necessarily matter in terms of 'how' to balance through BMD. As BMD is a critical factor for the MOD in securing budget and enlarging the SDF role, however the

prime minister constructs overarching approach to Japan's security, the means of which is likely to be determined by bureaucrats. Nonetheless, the prime minister is crucial when it comes to policy-making process in terms of the constitutional revision and reinterpretation.

Furthermore, the thesis disagrees with the influence of the public (Midford, 2006). As delineated by the variable of domestic institutions, the public often lacks any effective means to influence policy-making process in both constitutional reinterpretation and BMD development as the majority of the public does not seem to vote based on their preference on security policy. Rather, the public any potential concern is well-calculated by leaders in the way in which their interests are most effectively realised without much public opposition.

Shifting Japan's grand strategy

Besides the relative weight of unit-level factors, another finding is a nuanced and accurate interpretation of Japan's security policy development. Overall, Japan's temperamental yet incremental security policy development is examined in the name of grand strategy. As defined, grand strategy refers to the combination of the diplomatic, military (including tactical aspects for war) and economic factors to meet long term, larger ends that many often call 'national interests'. The grand strategic adjustment as a dependent variable in this thesis means a change/shift in not only the 'ends' but also the 'means'.

Accordingly, the two means and ends are conceptualised and likened by offensive and defensive realism. Whilst the former sees a heavy focus on defensive measures as a means to meet the ends to maximise security, the latter intends to maximise military power with so-called power projection capabilities as a means to meet the ultimate ends of achieving a regional hegemony that serves to maximise security. At the initial period of each case study, Japan began strengthening its strategy based on defensive realism—internal balancing through BMD deployment and external balancing with the nascent attempt to allow CSD. This stems from the relatively aggravating strategic environment with the rise of China, which at the time had not yet taken over Japan's economy and the emergence of North Korea without so much imminence to attack. Although the level of restrictiveness was not sufficient to allow Japan to have CSD in this period, the trend of strengthening defensive measures continued until 2012–2013.

Another sea change in the strategic environment adds extra restrictiveness, which eventually served as a critical juncture where Japan began its shift of grand strategy for more of an offensive realist state. The period saw high tension with China that finally overtook Japan's economy, and China's defence budget is more than twice as much as that of Japan. Similarly, from this period, North Korea began threatening the use of force not only against the US but also against Japan, with an exceptional sense of imminence, together with its intention and capability to inflict harm to Japan. Japan not only finally allowed CSD but also proceeded with the constitutional revision to eliminate the past shackles on its capacity. Similarly, BMD saw a different type of development towards the incorporation of offensive capabilities as part of the BMD system in Japan. Although it is not a complete shift, Japan surely set in motion a more aggressive balancing through means inspired by offensive realism.

As discussed, one of the domestic conditions for Japan to respond to the strategic environment in the way that realists predict is leaders' image with effective maintenance of their political legitimacy, particularly for elected leaders. The period from 2012 saw greater political stability in comparison with the previous period (2004–2012) or even potentially the most stable in the post-WWII period given the renewed and anticipated premiership of the current prime minister until 2021. The analysis of the two cases shows that opposition parties, the public and other economic actors did not display much influence to slow the progress of Japan towards a would-be offensive realist state. It is likely to continue this trajectory with a direct confrontation between the constitution as a barrier (domestic institutions) and leaders (leaders' image) within a broad parameter of the structure.

Therefore, Japan adjusted its grand strategy from a defensive realist-inspired one to an offensive realist-informed one since 2012 in answer to the question of when Japan would shift its strategy. The finding largely confirms the hypotheses outlined at the beginning of the chapter: the increasingly restrictive environment contributes to the shift from defensive realist behaviour to offensive realist behaviour. In this sense, the projected trajectory largely departs from the existing literature, most of which puts forward a more moderate interpretation of Japan's security policy development. This leads to the thesis prediction that Japan is on the path of an offensive realist state by enhancing both internal and external military capabilities, which now includes quasi-offensive capabilities not necessarily constrained by the constitution.

Further Research Scope

Several areas serve as a future research agenda based on the findings of the thesis. Theoretically, Japan can provide more case studies to test the logical consistency of NCR. First, there could be a similar research study on Japan's security policy development during the period before and after the Cold War (i.e. the period between the mid-1980s and the 1990s) during which Japan experienced a structural change in the balance of power with a purported departure from the post-WWII period. With consideration of domestic-level factors, research into how Japan developed with a new grand strategy, or the lack thereof, in response to the structure is fruitful. It can potentially capture the nascent grand strategic adjustment from almost complete absence in the balance of power to hedging. Examining how domestic factors come into play not only provides us with another clue to understanding Japan's enigmatic behaviour but also gives us an avenue to test NCR.

Turning to more empirically specific scopes, due to the limit of the research time frame, the thesis cannot provide a full picture of the constitutional revision because it has yet to take place. It thus cannot yet verify a causal mechanism of the state-society relations (i.e. the public and societal groups). Continued research, therefore, is meaningful for full verification of the intervening variables. In the alternative, statistical analysis could be useful in visualising the impact of the public on security policy outcome, which to the best of the author's knowledge is yet to be conducted.

Second, although the thesis aims to capture Japan's shift in grand strategy through the two case studies, the scope can be widened with more reference to China. In other words, examining balancing behaviour requires not only BMD but also other areas, specifically balancing against China through means such as offshore defence capabilities and Anti-Access/Area-Denial (A2/AD) capacity. This would examine the extent to which Japan's newly developed/acquired military capabilities can counter-balance against China.

Third, the analysis shows somewhat unexpectedly the potential intervening variables that are not incorporated. *Seiken-unyō nōryōku* ('the administration capacity of the government') somehow separates the public from the controversial security policy legislatures. Related to political stability, there is a growing tendency of the public to cherish the administration capacity as a voting preference despite the Cabinet's attempts

to enact the publicly disliked security legislations, which requires a more thorough examination.

Last, it is also interesting to provide an account as to why and how some of the institutionally embedded antimilitarism remained, and others did not. For instance, it is still unknown why the 1% GDP annual defence budget limit was not eliminated through the shift of grand strategy, as it is more costly than maintaining the status quo military capability.

Future Implications of Japan's Security Policy

The thesis lastly attempts to propose a future implication of Japan's security policy based on the NCR analysis. As NCR shares realism's fundamental principle that the structure is the most influential determinant, Japan will be likely to complete its shift to the offensive realist inspired grand strategy through acquiring more offensive, power projection capabilities to balance vis-à-vis China and North Korea. This is particularly true with regard to China because it is extremely likely that China will continue to rise with more aggressive behaviour, at least in the foreseeable future. Given the weakened institutional barriers in Japan, it seems that not much will prevent Japan from becoming more engaged in counter-balancing.

Turning to North Korea, the tension as of today seems relaxed after the US–Pyongyang meeting in June, at least to the public eye. However, given the extreme ambiguity of the agreement and its unknown implications on the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, the deployment of nuclear weapons on the Peninsula by North Korea and the US will not be promising (Personal Communication, 2018). This is all the more uncertain given that the content of the US agreement with North Korea in the 1990s is substantially similar. The situation could create a huge gap between leaders and the public in terms of the perception of threat, the latter of which is significantly reduced by the reduction of North Korean missile tests from 16 in 2017 to none in 2018. Japan may face difficulty in mobilising political resources to counter-balance against North Korea that conveniently serves as an effective mechanism to counter-balance against China at the same time through BMD. The absence of North Korea as a public appeal will probably force Japan to make a choice: openly counter-balance against China or return to the slow ambiguous counter-balancing behaviour (although NCR strongly supports the latter scenario).

This is related to the future of BMD and the US-Japan alliance. The nature of BMD is to address ICBM regardless of geographical proximity. Japan has already allowed the partial exercise of CSD to protect the US by addressing a ballistic missile launched towards the US. Given the unprecedented level of integration of the two militaries over BMD, the alliance will increasingly strengthen. This is unless both felt that BMD is unnecessary, which is unlikely to happen given the costs they hitherto spent and the role it played to strengthen the alliance. It is already hard to differentiate the US and Japanese Aegis destroyers in times of actual operations as both share information instantly, are obligated to protect each other, and have a joint task force and command that constructs a strategy on a daily basis. With the initial fear of disturbance of the alliance gone in the two years since the inauguration of Trump as US president, it is almost unthinkable that the alliance will disintegrate.

The future of constitutional revision is probably the most uncertain area, partly because Japan never revised the constitution nor held a referendum since WWII. However, whilst the probability is unknown, the likelihood has been greater than ever given the progress Japan made thus far. It formally established the procedure of the constitutional revision in 2007, proposed a quasi-agreement of the contents of the revision as the ruling party and has had the supermajority to pass the revision to proceed to a national referendum—the degree of maturity never seen before. Furthermore, the most pro-constitutional revision leader, Abe, was re-elected as president of the LDP and prime minister until 2021. If the national referendum was not in favour of the revision in a couple of years' time, Japan might miss the most favourable moment to revise. If it does, Japan will need, at least, a number of years—possibly a decade even—which will be a huge setback for implementing an offensive realist grand strategy. If that happens, Japan may readjust its strategy in accordance with domestic politics at the time.

There are several implications if the revision occurs. The revision itself has a symbolic significance for anti-militarism, which will be largely diminished and unable to play as much a role of a guardian to prevent Japan from counter-balancing as before. In fact, there are still a large number of proponents who believe the SDF is 'unconstitutional'. Given the current idea of the revision, which includes the stipulation of the SDF as constitutional, this radical view to always oppose any initiatives of SDF activities will be gone. Third, the current plan is to allow the possession of a minimally armed organisation required for self-defence, whilst the remaining clause prohibits the

possession of ‘war potential’, which is rather inconsistent given the interpretation that the armed organisation itself is arguably war potential. This suggests that a new series of interpretations of the newly revised constitution will emerge, rendering past interpretations ineffective. Thus, even with the current plan of revision, which seems moderate to most of the public, there is a likelihood that Japan further accelerates its balancing behaviour at the point at which the constitution is revised.

It is beyond the scope of the thesis to predict how likely it is that Japan will see a direct confrontation with China in the future. In fact, Japan has experienced an aggravating strategic environment with the rise of China, together with more aggressive behaviours in the region. So far Japan does not show any sign of confronting China and will be likely to continue this stance in the foreseeable future. However, with the very-tightened up structure of the US-Japan alliance, which sees China as a common threat with the potential to be a hegemon, a confrontation or even war seems inevitable—and the likelihood might increase with constitutional revision. Whether or not Japan can avoid the Thucydides Trap will seemingly depend on future leaders and will provide a future intensive research topic.

The List of Interviews

#	Date	Name	Position
1	14/07/2018	Takashi Genda	The Former ASDF member (Major General)
2	15/07/2018	Anonymous	The Former president of the Mitsubishi Aircraft Cooperation
3	17/07/2018	Anonymous	The Mitsubishi Heavy Industry (Executive Director)
4	18/07/2018	Anonymous	The Mitsubishi Heavy Industry (the Defence Domain)
5	19/07/2018	Kenichiro Hokazono	The former Chief of Staff, Air Self Defence Force
6	20/07/2018	Shigeru Iwasaki	The former Chief of Staff (the highest-ranking military officer)
7	23/07/2018	Dr Junji Yamakawa	Professor at the National Defence Academy of Japan (previously the SDF member: Commanding Officer of the JGSDF Test and Evaluation Command)
8	23/07/2018	Mamoru Shinohara	Professor at the National Defence Academy of Japan (working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
9	24/07/2018	Sadaaki Tabei	Professor at the National Defence Academy of Japan (working for the Ministry of Defence, previously a Minister's secretariat)
10	24/07/2018	Dr Yasuhiro Takeda	Professor at the National Defence Academy of Japan
11	02/08/2018	Toshiaki Miura	Asahi Shimbun Journalist
12	02/08/2018	Anonymous	Asahi Shimbun Journalist
13	04/08/2018	Dr Masahiro Kohara	Professor at the University of Tokyo (previously working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
14	04/08/2018	Anonymous	Professor at the Housei University
15	06/08/2018	Anonymous	The former executive at the Mitsubishi Research Institute
16	07/08/2018	Anonymous	GR Japan (political consultancy company)
17	07/08/2018	Anonymous	GR Japan (political consultancy company)

18	09/08/2018	Dr Ken Jinbo	Professor at the Keio University
19	09/08/2018	Dr Jeff Kingston	Professor at the Temple University
20	10/08/2018	Anonymous	Nihon TV Journalist
21	12/08/2018	Anonymous	Asahi Shimbun Journalist
22	19/08/2018	Anonymous	Working for the Ministry of Finance
23	20/08/2018	Anonymous	Ministry of Defence
24	23/08/2018	Anonymous	Ministry of Defence
25	24/08/2018	Anonymous	Keidanren; the Defence and Production Division
26	24/08/2018	Anonymous	Keidanren; the Defence and Production Division

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